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Increasing business to business customer engagement through social media

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In a highly competitive business environment, engaging customers is critical for companies to succeed. Customer engagement creates deep connections and long lasting relationship which drives purchase decisions, build trust and cultivate loyalty over time. Business is happening where customers are. Companies are offered great motivations to be present in social media. However, many businesses are not able to engage with customers efficiently and effectively due to insufficient understanding of customers' preference and expectation.

This research aims to investigate how to increase business to business customer engagement in social media. Firstly, possible perception gaps between customers' expectation and business people's assumptions were studied through surveys in four countries. In addition, interviews were conducted with business people to learn from their first-hand experience. It intends to find out the means to advance and deepen customer engagement through social media.

Research results indicated that there are clear perception gaps between business people's assumption and customers' social media preference and behavior. Business people are twice more likely to think that customers are willing to engage in business-related activities in social media. Business people assumed different set of activities that are popular for customers. In order to engage customers more effectively, companies should build a clear corporate identity in social media, generate quality content that appeals to customers, establish a dedicated cross-unit team with a coherent working process and have synergy among different business operations and projects.

Keywords: Social media, Customer engagement, Business to business

Preface

My sincere gratitude goes to Professor Eila Järvenpää for her great patience and guidance. I would like to thank my instructor Päivi Puntila, who has given me great opportunities in professional development as well as warm support in personal life.

I am grateful for having wonderful family and friends, who have always been there for me. At the same time, I want to thank myself to get the thesis finalized, while growing and developing as an individual.

Tapiola, 20.11.2014

Chen Wang

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Abbreviations

B2B	Business-to-business
B2C	Business-to-consumer
HQ	Headquarters
SEA	South East Asia
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States

1 Introduction

Winning and keeping customers is a great challenge in today's business world. In a highly competitive business environment, customer engagement is critical for companies to succeed (Kumar et al., 2010). "Engage or die" is the new marketing catchphrase.

Customer engagement creates deep connections and long lasting relationship with customers that drive purchase decisions, interaction, and participation over time (Kumar et al., 2010). Companies who engage with customers and markets can cultivate loyalty in ways never possible before and be long standing in business.

"Traditional marketers will lose, unless they embrace new media" (Solis, 2006). Social media has become a dominant force in consumer culture and is being exploited by some of the world's leading businesses. 54% of executives of consumer goods companies indicated that social media was central to their effort to engage customers in 2011 (WARC, 2012). Companies are using social media to develop relationships with their customers (PwC, 2013).

Companies are offered great motivations to be present in social media. Business is happening where customers are (PwC, 2013). United States citizens now spend roughly 10, 8% of their total time online on Facebook, topping all other online sites including Google in 2012 (comScore, 2013). In addition, customers are connecting and having conversations about organizations through social media, whether organizations are actively engaged in social media or not (PwC, 2013). Forrester (2011) report shows that more than 33% of European online customers evaluate and compare the things they desire based on their peers' opinion on social platforms. Brands risk being compromised if they fail to participate (PwC, 2013).

However, it is a great challenge to effectively engage with customers in social media. Market research firms Rubinson Partners and Compete measured the users' Facebook interaction with 63 brands over a four-month period (WARC, 2012b). The report shows that more than 95% of brands were not able to attract visitors to repeatedly visit the brand Facebook page during a period of 30 days. On average less than one out of 20 fans who "like" a brand Facebook page choose to return their page within one month (WARC,

2012b). Furthermore, even if visitors return to the brand Facebook page, the level of interaction is extremely low. A study from the Ehrenberg-Bass Institute research (Creamer, 2012) shows that slightly over 1% of customers were actually engaged with the brand after initially becoming a fan, interacting with brands such as liking posts and taking part in conversations.

Do businesses understand customers' preferences and expectations in social media? According to Baird and Parasnis research (2011), business people in business-to-consumer companies are three times more likely to think that customers are interested in interacting with them to feel being part of a community. Customers are more pragmatic as they tend to interact with business if they see benefits (Baird and Parasnis, 2011). There seems to be great perception gaps between customers' expectation and company' offering in social media. This research intends to investigate the possible perception gaps between customers' expectation and business-to-business (B2B) company's offering in social media. In addition, learn from marketers' first-hand experience and find ways to engage B2B customers in social media.

1.1 Structure of the thesis

As shown in Figure 1, the thesis consists of theoretical research on use of social media in engaging customers, research questions, research method and material, result as well as discussion.

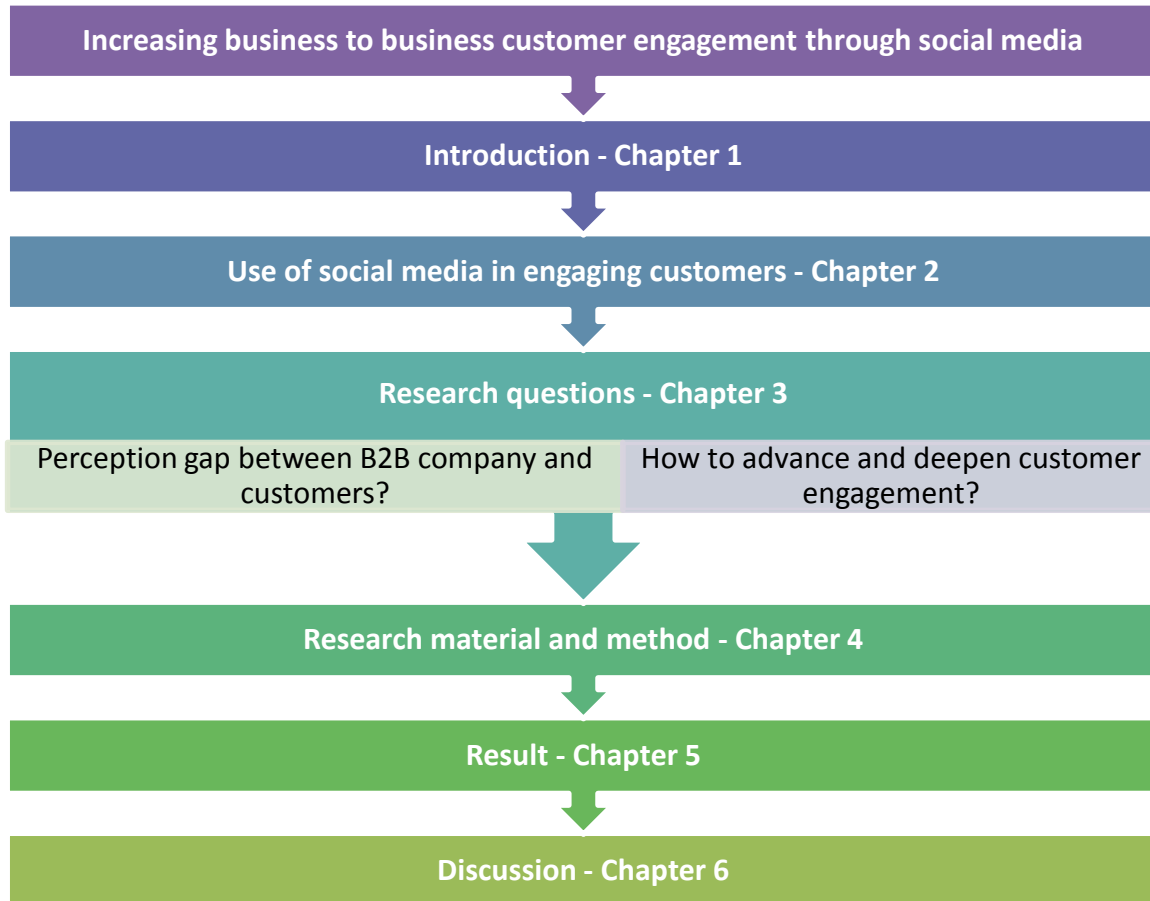


Figure 1: Structure of the thesis.

In chapter 2, established theories and previous researches on engaging customers in social media were studied. The key concepts include customer engagement, social media and channels, business to business market, and perception gaps between business assumptions and customers' expectations in social media.

Research questions were presented in chapter 3. The main question of how to engage business to business (B2B) customers in social media is divided into two research questions. In order to engage customers, business people need to fully understand customers' expectations and preferences. The first question is what perception gaps there are between business people's assumption and customer's expectation in social media.

Secondly, how to deepen and advance B2B customer engagement process through social media?

In chapter 4, the research method and material were described in details. A software company in building and construction industry was used as a case company for both quantitative and qualitative data collection.

Results from empirical study are presented in chapter 5, including perception gaps of social media usage between B2B companies and customers, B2B company social media's usage to engage customers and the further steps to advance and deepen customer engagement in social media.

Chapter 6 answers the research questions, and compares the results with previous studies. It includes discussion about the limitations of this research as well as practical implementation for B2B companies. Further studies are proposed as well.

2 Engage customers in social media

2.1 Customer engagement

Customer engagement has been discussed and defined in the field of marketing by many scholars and business practitioners. Since 2005, the term has gained popularity; there have been a few systematic scholarly attempts to define the concept (Brodie et al., 2011a). However, there is a lack of consensus regarding the conceptualization of this emerging concept.

Customer engagement is presented as a sequential psychological process by Bowden (2009). He suggests that this process models the underlying mechanism by which customers become increasingly loyal towards a brand. Loyalty can be developed for new customers and loyalty can be maintained for existing customers through repeat purchase (Bowden, 2009).

Customer engagement has been explored from the perspective of customer management (Verhoef et al., 2010). The research of van Doorn et al. (2010) suggested the definition of Customer engagement as *“behaviors that go beyond transactions, and may be specifically defined as a customer’s behavioral manifestations that have a brand or firm focus, beyond purchase, resulting from motivational drivers”*.

This definition implies that van Doorn et al. (2010) focus on the behavioral aspects of relationship between customers and companies. Five dimensions for customer engagement were proposed by van Doorn et al. (2010).

Customer’s resources. Customer engagement can be expressed in terms of the resources (e.g. time) that customers engage.

Outcomes. Customer engagement can result in different types of outcomes for the customer (e.g. improvements in the service).

Scope. The scopes of customer engagement differ, and it can be momentary, such as complaint or ongoing behavior.

Impact. Different customer engagement can result in varying (positive/negative) impact on the firm and peers.

Purpose. Customers engage with firms for different reasons.

Kumar et al. (2010) argues that the non-transactional behavior manifestations should not be ignored. The valuation of the customers can be potentially mistaken if non-transactional behavior is not taken into account. Kumar et al. (2010) introduces a new metrics for customer valuation by including both transactional and non-transactional behaviors, extending the customer value management framework to “Total Customer Engagement Value”. This represents an important advance in managerial thinking that has implications for managing online brand communities (Brodie et al., 2013).

Kumar et al. (2010) suggested that customer engagement consists of four core dimensions:

Customer purchasing behavior. It refers to repeat purchases or additional purchases through up-selling and cross-selling.

Customer referral behavior. Companies initiate and incentivize referral programs among existing customers to acquire new customers.

Customer influencer behavior. Customers have great influence on other existing customers and prospects (e.g., word-of-mouth). Such behavior can potentially persuade and convert prospects to customers. It minimizes buyer’ regression, and increases share-of-wallet of existing customers.

Customer knowledge behavior. Companies can be benefitted from customers’ feedback, which contributes to idea generation for innovations and improvements as well as to knowledge development.

Hollebeek (2011) presents the concept of customer engagement with a focus on the interactions between a specific subject (the customer) and the focal object (brand). He defines customer engagement as *“the level of an individual customer’s motivational, brand-related and context-dependent state of mind characterized by specific levels of cognitive, emotional and behavioral activity in direct brand interactions”*

The cognitive activities refer to the level of engrossment or concentration towards a brand. Emotional activities link with individual’s pride and inspiration. Whereas behavioral activity reflects individual’s interaction in different forms on various levels with the brand

(Hollebeek, 2011). Hollebeek (2011) agrees with Bowden (2009) that customer engagement positively contributes to customer's loyalty towards a brand.

However, Higgins and Scholer (2009) suggest that customer engagement includes both positive and negative attributes. They have conceptualized customer engagement as a state of sustained attention with full involvement and absorption. Higgins and Scholer (2009) recognize that individuals can be engaged on different levels; the more engaged they are the more intensive their experience will be. If a customer experiences negative engagement with the brand, the intensity of the negative experience is proportional to the level of involvement and engagement. On the other hand, a customer will have more positive experience as a result of more engagement. Thus, customer engagement consists of both positive (e.g. attraction) and negative (e.g. repulsion) elements of engagement (Higgins and Scholer, 2009)

Mollen and Wilson (2010) further explored customer engagement from the perspective of online customer experience. They identified three experiential states from a consumer's experiential response to a website or other computer-mediated entity, including perceived interactivity, telepresence and engagement. Engagement is suggested by the authors to consist of dimensions of active, sustained, cognitive processing, attainment of instrumental value (cognitive), and experiential value (emotional congruence) (Mollen and Wilson, 2010).

As observed from the majority of customer engagement definitions in Table 1, Brodie et al. (2011) summarized three dimensions of the concept, cognitive, emotional and behavioral dimensions. Customer engagement is beyond mere involvement with a specific brand, it extends to a proactive and interactive relationship with both transactional and non-transactional behavior. In addition, Mollen and Wilson (2010) suggests that customer engagement transcends "the mere exercise of cognition," it differentiates from "involvement" as customer engagements has satisfaction as a result, it emphasizes "interactivity" and "customer experience".

Table 1: Customer engagement conceptualizations in the marketing literature in chronological order (Brodie et al., 2011).

Author(s)	Concept	Definition	Dimensionality
Bowden (2009)	Customer engagement process	A psychological process that models the underlying mechanisms by which customer loyalty forms for new customers of a service brand as well as the mechanisms by which loyalty may be maintained for repeat purchase customers of a service brand.	Multidimensional: C, E, B*
Higgins and Scholer (2009)	Engagement	A state of being involved, occupied, fully absorbed or engrossed in something (i.e. sustained attention), generating the consequences of a particular attraction or repulsion force. The more engaged individuals are to approach or repel a target, the more value is added to or subtracted from it.	Multidimensional: C, E, B
Van Doorn et al. (2010)	Customer engagement behavior	Customers' behavioral manifestation towards a brand or firm, beyond purchase, resulting from motivational drivers such as word-of-mouth activity, recommendations, helping other customers, blogging, writing reviews.	Unidimensional: B
Kumar et al. (2010)	Customer Engagement Value	Customer engagement is comprised of four core dimensions, Customer purchasing behavior, Customer referral behavior, Customer influencer behavior and Customer knowledge behavior.	Multidimensional: C, E, B
Mollen and Wilson (2010)	Online brand engagement	The customer's cognitive and affective commitment to an active relationship with the brand as personified by the website or other computer-mediated entities designed to communicate brand value.	Multidimensional: Sustained cognitive processing (C), instrumental value (C), experiential value (E).
Hollebeek (2011)	Customer brand engagement	The level of a customer's motivational, brand-related and context-dependent state of mind characterized by specific levels of cognitive, emotional and behavioral activity in brand interactions.	Multidimensional: C, E, B

Engagement dimensionality: C: Cognitive - E: Emotional – B: Behavioral (Brodie et al., 2011)

Brodie et al. (2011) derived five fundamental propositions (FPs) of customer engagement concept from existing concept. The FPs attempt to delineate the concept from other relational concepts, such as “participation” or “involvement”. This definition of customer engagement will be used in this research. Brodie et al. (2011) presents customer engagement as following:

- Customer engagement reflects a psychological state, which occurs by virtue of interactive customer experiences with a focal agent/object within specific service relationships.
- Customer engagement states occur within a dynamic, iterative process of service relationships that co-create value.
- Customer engagement plays a central role within a nomological network of service relationships.
- Customer engagement is a multidimensional concept subject to a context- and/or stakeholder-specific expression of relevant cognitive, emotional and behavioral dimensions.
- Customer engagement occurs within a specific set of situational conditions which generate different customer engagement levels.

2.2 Social media and social media channels

Social media refers to “a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content” (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). Cohen (2011) has proposed a comprehensive definition of social media. She describes social media as “platforms that enable the interactive web by engaging users to participate in, comment on and create content as means of communicating with their social graph, other users and the public”. According to Cohen (2011), social media has the characteristics as follow:

- Allow wide variety of content formats, e.g. video, audio, text, photographs, PDF and PowerPoint.
- Enable interactions across platforms.
- Engage in different levels by participants who post, follow, comment or lurk in social media.
- Facilitate one-to-one, one-to-many and many-to-many communications real time.

- Allow it via different devices, including computer, tablets and mobile phones.
- Extends engagement offline from online events, or streaming live events online (Cohen, 2011).

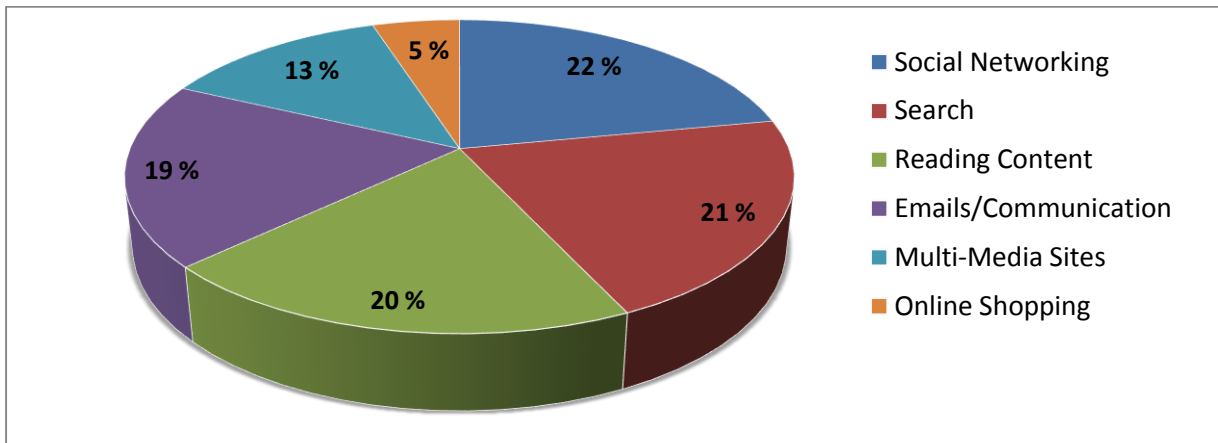












Figure 2: People's share of time spent online (Thorhauge, 2012).

Networking in social media has become the most popular and time consuming online activity. Users spend more than one fifth (22%) of their time in social media channels (Thorhauge, 2012) as shown in Figure 2. Google has the highest amount of unique visitors each month 153,441,000, closely followed by Facebook reaching 138 million unique visitors. However, people spend about 4 times as much time on Facebook (7 hours and 45 minutes) as on Google (1 hour and 47 minutes) (Thorhauge, 2012). Top 10 most visited web site is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Top 10 most visited web sites. (Thorhauge, 2012)

	Unique visitors per month	Time spent per person per month in hh:mm:ss
	153,441,000	1:47:42
	137,644,000	7:45:49
	130,121,000	2:12:08
	115,890,000	1:43:45
	106,692,000	1:41:27
	83,691,000	0:45:05
	74,633,000	2:52:52
	62,097,000	0:18:03
	61,608,000	1:06:15
	60,552,000	0:12:27

It is astonishing to see how fast, wide and deep that social media penetrate. It took 13 years for television to reach a worldwide audience of 50 million. Facebook achieved it in just three years (McKinsey Global Institute, 2011). There are numerous social media sites, the major social media include the following sites.

Facebook is a social utility that connects people with friends and others who work, study and live around them. People use Facebook to follow the status of their friends, upload an unlimited number of photos, share links and videos, and interact with people online. Facebook is made up of six primary components: personal profiles, status updates, networks (geographic regions, schools, and companies), groups, applications and fan pages (Reuben, 2008).

At the end of January 2014, Facebook has 1, 23 billion monthly active users worldwide (Facebook, 2014). If Facebook were a physical nation, it would now be the third most

populous on earth, almost the size of India. Time spent on Facebook was greater than time spent on Google sites in the U.S. in August for the first time in history. United States citizens now spend roughly 16% of their total time online on Facebook (Davis and Angelova, 2011).

Blogs are a form of online journal that is written by a single author, or several. Readers can post comments in response to an article or post (Consortium 2007).

Twitter is a cross between instant messaging and blogging that allows users to send text-based messages of to 140 characters. Users can also follow their friends, experts, celebrities, and breaking news. People can send direct messages, reply publicly to friends, or just post questions or comments as their current status (Consortium 2007). Twitter has become a critical marketing tool for companies to interact with customers, and promote product and services. As of February, 2012, Twitter has over 500 million registered users, generating over 340 million tweets per day (Twitter, 2013).

YouTube is the leader in online video sharing website. It is the premier destination to watch and share original videos worldwide. People can easily upload and share video clips across the Internet through multiple devices, e.g. web sites, mobile devices, blogs, and e-mail (Reuben, 2008).

LinkedIn is a professional networking tool. People build professional identity online and network with colleagues and classmates. It helps to discover professional opportunities, business deals and new ventures. Moreover, latest news, inspiration and insights can be found (LinkedIn, 2013).

2.2.1 Relationship in online communities

Armstrong and Hagel (1996) classified online communities into four different types: communities of interests, community of relationship, community of transaction and community of practice. It is fundamental to an organization engaging in marketing through acquisition, retention and nurturing of customer relationship.

Quinton and March (2010) argued that social and emotional bonds can be formed within online social networks. The virtual communication and social networks provide connections which allow customers to form strong relationship; and thus influencing consumer behavior and creating a sense of loyalty. The development of relationship over time and participation reinforces a sense of community as the positive reinforcement that

contributors get when receiving comments. The community and the relationships are strengthened through acknowledgement and recognition (Joyce and Kraut, 2006).

Within social network the level of engagement has been categorized. Nonnecke and Preece (2001) introduced the term “lurkers”, it refers to the interested visitors who “lurk” on social network by observing the content and culture of the network without any active contribution. Golder (2003) and Kozinets (1998) described the next level of engagement as “newbies” and “tourists” respectively. They defined the groups of visitors who started to post and interact, however, have demonstrated no sign of commitment or engagement. Golder also categorized “celebrities” in a social network as those have high competence level and are devoting time and energy to the network. Kozinets (2006) added to the categorization with “minglers”, “devotees” and “insiders”. Those who post irregularly and infrequently are considered to be “minglers”. “Devotees” are defined as community members who post regularly and started to develop social ties. “Insiders” are those who possess expert judgment, and proactively start discussion topics; they have built strong social and emotional ties to the network.

2.2.2 Using social media to engage customers

IBM CEO Study (2010) stated that getting closer to customers is a top priority for CEOs. Companies need to be where customers congregate. There is enormous potential for companies to get close to customers through social media. Companies need to design customer experiences that provide tangible value in return for customers’ time, attention, endorsement and data. It facilitates to increase revenue, cost reduction and efficiencies.

Gummerus et al. (2012) posits that the benefits of customer engagement through social media include practical benefits, social benefits, social enhancement, entertainment and economic benefits. Practical benefits consist of informational and instrumental benefits. Social media provide platforms for information exchange, such as customer feedback and questions. Customers would become more knowledgeable and aware of the product offering, thus gaining information benefit. (Casaló et al, 2010/2011)

Social benefits are achieved through interaction between companies and customers (Gwinner et al., 1998). Social enhancement is derived from the need to feel useful, being listened to, recognized and responded (Hars and Ou, 2002). Another element in customer engagement that motivates customer engagement in social media is entertainment benefits. It derives from relaxation and fun through their online experience. (Dholakia et

al.,2004) People seek discounts and time savings, or participate in raffle and competition to gain economic benefits. (Gwinner et al., 1998)

Customer behavioral engagement (CEB) positively affects relationship benefits, consisting of social, entertainment, and economic benefits. CEB includes behavior such as liking and sharing content, writing comments/tweets, and reading posts influence all relationship benefits. (Gummerus et al, 2012)

Unlike traditional media, social media has distinguishing characteristics as a marketing media and channel (PwC, 2012):

Companies have little control of communication. Companies are no longer in control of business messages. There is an accelerating shift of control from companies to customers and their social communities. Regardless if a company has a social media strategy, customers are already engaging in social media and are talking about companies. More customers are basing their purchasing decisions on peer interaction, companies need to reevaluate the role of advertising, branding, public release and other traditional means of communications.

It is a conversation. Communication in social media is expected to be a dialogue or a conversation. Authenticity, transparency and honesty are mandatory characteristics of this conversation. Companies need to speak openly and genuinely. Listening to their discussions, respond and provide customized, valuing-adding content can harness the power of social media.

Customers are given a job. Social media is a platform to share. Companies are co-creating content, service offerings or even products together with customers, employees and business partners. Social media messages that target at a specific group attract 2-4 times more responses than a generic advertisement. Marketing communication is much more efficient than traditional marketing propositions with the possibility that social media brought (PwC, 2012).

The interactive nature of social media enables firms and individuals to establish conversation, and involve both parties in producing content and generating value. Practitioners have been at the forefront of attempts to better serve customers and satisfy their needs by understanding, defining and building customer engagement through social media (PwC, 2012).

UK digital strategist Omar Kattan (2012) points out the healthy return for relatively little investment. He argued that there are no paper, printing, postage or mailing costs. Electronic marketing is free. One person dedicated to social media marketing can result in reaching thousands and potentially hundreds of thousands of customers. Omar Kattan (2012) said

“It’s not the size of the business but the speed that matters”.

Kattan (2012) further stated the benefits of transforming to social media marketing.

1. Business taps into the data stream in social media to connect with customers on a personal level.
2. Listening to customers in real time can help companies to adjust project and service offering. Business can be in the front line of market shifts and sense the trends as they happen.
3. Being able to learn customers’ experiences real time and having the opportunity to personally monitor the quality of your company’s customer service. Marketing research shows that the average person tells three people about a pleasant experience and ten people about an unpleasant experience with business.

2.3 Customer engagement matrix and cycle in social media

The concept of customer engagement is not limited to website or online channels. Customer engagement encompasses a number of dimensions: product involvement, purchase frequency, service interactions frequency, and types of interactions, online behavior, referral behavior/intention, and velocity (Shevlin, 2007). Moreover, customers are engaged on different levels and phases in a customer engagement cycle.

A popular model of customer engagement cycle is described as awareness, consideration, inquiry, purchase and retention (Ertell, 2010). However, they are more of stages in a purchase decision cycle rather than customer engagement cycle (Sashi, 2012). Ertell (2010) suggests to add the missing links in the cycle, satisfaction and referral. According to Ertell (2010), satisfaction is simply the foundation, and the minimum requirement for a continuing relationship with customers.

Sashi (2012) suggests that the essential element in customer engagement is to provide more superior value than competitors, and engage them become partners in the value

adding activities of the organization as co-creators of value, resulting in trust and commitment in long-term relationship engagement. Social media plays significant role in facilitating interactivities between customers and companies as well as conversation among customers to establish enduring intimate relationship with trust and commitment. Building emotional bonds between sellers and buyers on top of the enduring relationship with relational exchanges completes the process off customer engagement (Sashi, 2012).

2.3.1 Customer engagement matrix

Customers are engaged with companies on different levels, it varies in terms of the degree of relational exchange and emotional bonds that characterize the relationship. Sashi (2012) proposes a customer engagement matrix to identify and position the customer based on the characteristics of engagement. Sellers can use the matrix to understand the general customer engagement and transit the customers from one group to another.

The customer engagement matrix (Sashi, 2012) has relational exchange along the horizontal axis and emotional bonds along the vertical axis in Figure 3. Relational exchange varies along a continuum from discrete transactional exchange at the low end and enduring relational exchange approaching to the high end. Emotional bonds range from little emotional attachment to intimate relationships with strong emotional attachment. Four groups of customers are formed according to the low or high relational exchange linked to low or high emotional bonds: transactional customers, loyal customers, delighted customers and fans.

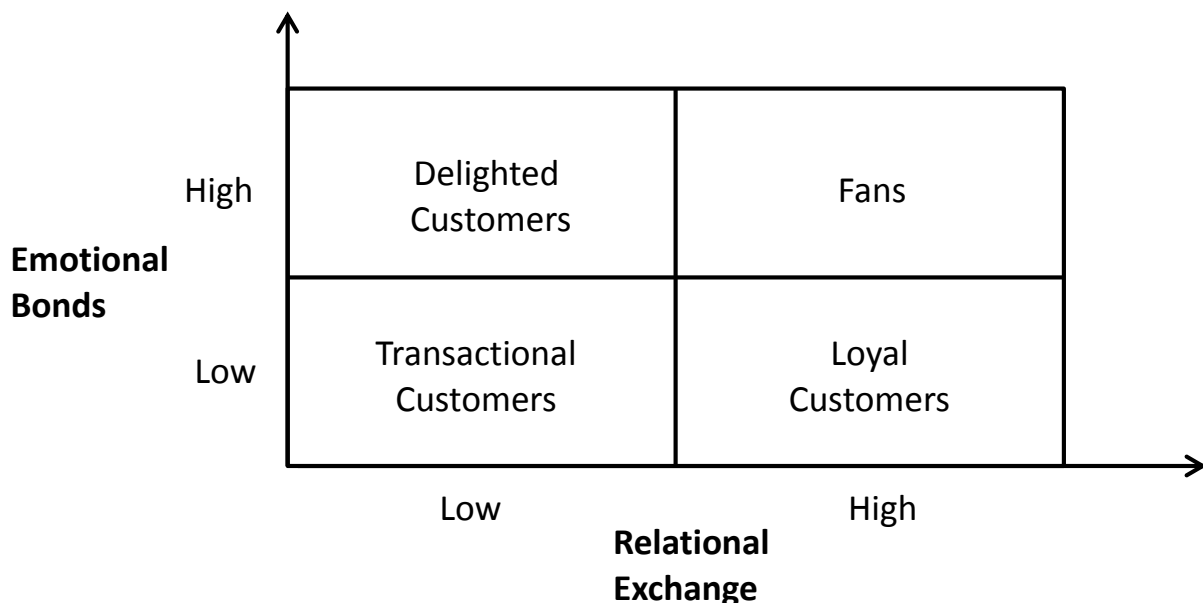


Figure 3: Customer engagement matrix (Sashi, 2012).

Transactional customers are at the low end of both relational exchange and emotional bond. This group is characterized with minimal personal relationships with the companies and no anticipation or obligation of future exchanges (Macneil, 1981). They are price sensitive and prone to deals. They do not have loyalty towards brands, the primary purchasing criteria is the minimal price or lowest total cost. Exchanges between the customer and the company are temporary and limited to a particular transaction (Sashi, 2012).

Transactional customers have great potential to be turned to other cells in the customer engagement matrix. By ensuring their overall satisfaction, they can be turned into delighted customers, or by maintaining the seller-buyer relationship with more transactions, they can become loyal customers (Sashi, 2012).

Delighted customers have low relational exchange, but their emotional bonds are high. The experience with the company has exceeded their expectation, leading to a high level of satisfaction. The transactions are not frequent and delighted customers do not have an enduring relationship with the company despite of their positive emotional bonds (Sashi, 2012).

This group of customers has developed affective commitment to a company, which translates to advocates for a product, service, a brand, or the company. Harrison-Walker (2011) states that affective commitment is positively related to word-of-mouth communication, suggesting that delighted customers tend to communicate their positive experience in their social networks. They can be turned to “fans” if companies are able to develop enduring relationship with the customers who are already on the advocacy stage.

The customers who have high relational exchange but low emotional bonds are falling into the category of **loyal customers**. They are bond to the company with calculative commitment in which they are locked in with the supplier due to switching costs or lack of alternative suppliers. Customers are loyal to the current supplier not because of the emotional attachment but purely rational reasons (Sashi, 2012). Therefore, they are unlikely to recommend the company.

The company can turn loyal customers into advocates by developing affective commitment (Garbarino and Johnson, 1999). Trust and emotional bonds are essential to become fans of certain company.

If customers have high relational exchange and high level of emotional bonds, the customers are **Fans** and we have customer engagement (Sashi, 2012). Fans have long-lasting relationship with the company with affective and calculative commitment. They are both loyal and delight customers. Fans and the company have established a cooperative relationship with mutual adjustment, sharing of benefits and burdens and planning for future exchanges (Macneil, 1981).

Fans base is built among the other three groups of customers. Transactional customers are turned into fans by creating satisfaction, trust and calculative commitment. By developing trust and affective commitment, loyal customers can be turned into fans. Delight customer are made into fans by creating calculative commitment and loyalty (Sashi, 2012).

2.3.2 Customer engagement cycle

Customer engagement is built by developing relational exchange and emotional bonds. It is not built in one day, but through a continuous process of customer engagement cycle. Sashi (2012) proposes a customer engagement cycle which consists of connection, interaction, satisfaction, retention, commitment, advocacy, and engagement, as shown in Figure 4. This model is applicable for new customers' first-time purchase without feedback loop for future purchases. Sashi's proposal (2012) addresses the interaction between customers and companies and emotional involvement with the intermediate stages in the customer engagement development path.

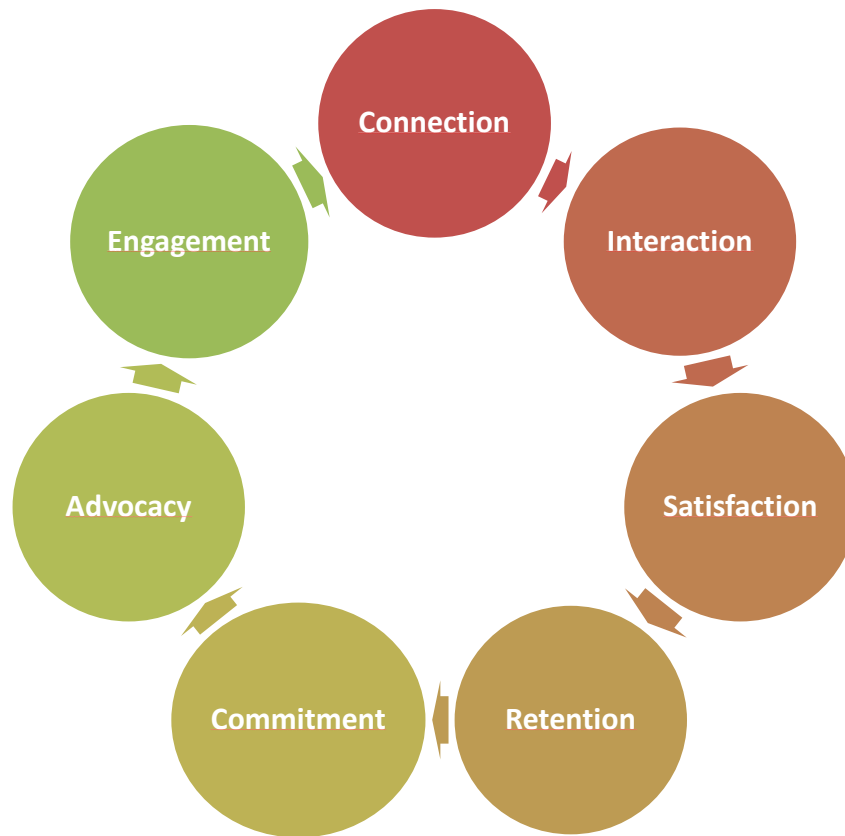


Figure 4: Customer engagement cycle (Sashi, 2012)

Connection. Being connected to companies is the prerequisite for customers to engage. Social media greatly facilitate the establishment of connections with a wide audience of individuals and firms (Sashi, 2012). Customers are connected with companies with established relationship through new channels, e.g. a Dell laptop owner likes Dell page in Facebook and connect with them online. Customer may use existing connections to satisfy the need, therefore, activate the connection. Customer may seek solutions through their friends and other customers who have the same situation. Companies can reach out to customers to initiate the connection.

By establishing the connection, companies can assist customers to choose particular product or service. Companies can connect with a customer even before the needs arise to be in the position of suggesting existing products or even developing new products for customers (Sashi, 2012). This connection is very important in purchase decisions which usually made by individuals from different departments and hierarchical levels of the organization (Sashi, 2009). Connection with purchasing company in different levels, including decision makers, influencers, buyers and end users, bring supplier great benefit of getting past the gatekeeper in the purchase process (Sashi, 2012).

Interaction. Web 2.0 has torn down the technical limitations, enabling real time interactions worldwide more frequently, faster with richer content and multi-media formats. Social media provides a platform to interact with significantly large groups to co-create value (Sashi, 2012). The revolutionary change of social media is that the control of communication is shifted from companies to customers (PwC, 2012).

Social media allows a continuous two-way dialogue. Customers' input help companies to improve their understanding about customers' needs, and making modification of products and services. Companies can provide customers product information and answer their questions (Sawhney et al., 2005). In software business, it is essential to be close to customers to understand their needs and agile methods are recommended to continuously cooperate with customers throughout the development cycle (Hanssen and Faegri, 2006).

Satisfaction. Satisfaction is a necessary condition for customer engagement so that customers stay connected and continue to interact. Satisfaction is not the ultimate goal, but an intermediate step to achieve organization's goal (Mittal and Kamakura, 2001). Satisfaction with interaction in purchasing process may help proceed the purchase decision process. Dissatisfaction in any stage of the purchase process may cause disruption and customer exit. However, satisfaction might not lead to repurchase or a long-term relationship. A high level of satisfaction can be achieved when customers' expectations are exceeded and emotions become highly positive (Sashi, 2012).

Retention. Overall satisfaction over time or highly positive emotions can result in customer retention, which consists of two key elements: enduring relationship and emotional bonds. Enduring relationship refers to repurchases over a long period of time. Emotional bonds are built between companies and customers by highly positive experience and overall satisfaction. Either during relationship or emotional bond can lead to retention (Sashi, 2012). Gustafsson et al.(2005) study shows customer satisfaction and calculative commitment are positively related to retention. Affective commitment does not have an effect on retention.

Commitment. Affective commitment and calculative commitment are the major factors contributing to overall commitment (Gustafsson et al., 2005). Calculative commitment is a rational choice and results from a lack of choice, switching costs and other rational analysis. It leads to loyalty and long-lasting relationship between customer and company. Affective commitment is due to trust and reciprocity in a relationship, reflecting the

emotional attachment. It leads to high level of trust and customer delight (Gustafsson et al., 2005). If the customer has both calculative commitment and affective commitment, customers tend to have a loyal and enduring relationship with the company with strong emotional bonds (Sashi, 2012).

Advocacy. People may spread the words about their positive experience regarding a product, a service, a company or a brand. Customers who have developed strong emotional bonds with the company are likely to become advocates (Sashi, 2012). Harrison-Walker's research (2001) has shown that affective commitment has positive influence on customer advocacy but not calculative commitment. It suggests delight customers are likely to share their satisfaction of certain product, service or with the company to others in a connected world like social media.

Advocacy role is not only played by the customers. Urban (2004) emphasized the significance that companies act in customer's best interests and advocate for them. Customer relationship is shifting away from caring and delighting customers. Companies and customers are looking after each other's interests and focus on the exchange of values that transcend their self-interests (Nordin, 2009). Companies must search for the best fit for the clients even if the product is from their competitors. Urban (2004) stated the reason is that "if a company advocates for its customers, they will reciprocate their trust, loyalty and purchases – either now or in the future".

Engagement. Customer engagement requires both calculative and affective commitment, meaning customers are both loyal and delight. In addition, customers' role is expanded to value adding process as co-creators of value. The inclusion of customers in company's value creation process enhance customers' satisfaction of products and service, and companies are able to grasp customers' need while it is developing. Customers become advocates for companies to interact with other customers and non-customers (Sashi, 2012). Customers are turned into fans. Customer engagement results in more relational exchange and strong emotional bond. It leads to more interactions and connections, creating a virtuous customer engagement cycle (Sashi, 2012).

2.4 Business to Business market

Business to Business (B2B) market refers to business markets in which firms, institutions or governments that acquire goods and services either for their own use, to incorporate into the products or services that they produce or for resale along with other products and services to other firms, institutions or governments.” (Anderson et al., 2009)

B2B markets have a number of unique characteristics. It handles complex deals, contracts and technologies. It often involves large amounts and often risky transactions. In addition, a small number of key accounts can contribute to a large percentage of company's revenues. Furthermore, suppliers and customers work closely together for an extended period of time. The B2B buying process is comprised of multiple participants. Decision-makers are those who make the choice of supplier/service provider. Influencers do not make the actual decision, but provide significant input that influences the decision. End users actually use the product or service provided (Haynes, 2013).

Fully engage with customer bring B2B suppliers and service providers numerous benefits as follows.

Improved financial performance. Gallup Consulting (2012) report shows that fully engaged customers deliver a 23% premium over average customers in terms of share of wallet, profitability and revenue. In addition, low engagement scores were found to be a prime indicator of future revenue decline (Boyle and Kamins, 2012).

Loyalty. Engaged business customers will purchase more of their required goods and services, in some cases, even exclusively. Gallup Consulting (2012) indicates that fully engaged customers are strongly emotionally attached and attitudinally loyal. They'll go out of their way to locate a favored product or service, and they are less likely to switch to substitutes.

Advocacy. Referrals and recommendations have great significance on B2B buying decision process. 60% of B2B customers will consider at least one peer's opinion before making a buying decision. Therefore, creating engaged customers will help to generate the referrals and recommendations that are critical in acquiring new business (Haynes, 2013).

2.4.1 Evolution of B2B customer behavior

B2B customers' behavior has been transferred through adoption to the Internet and the online environment. The internet has evolved a long way since the date of birth; people's online habits, knowledge, skills, attitude and behavior have evolved alongside. As one of the most serious and heavy users of the Internet, B2B world has been fully embracing the instant gratification and online independence of the Internet. A new breed of B2B customers has emerged with characteristics of being more connected, more impatient, more elusive, more impulsive, and more informed than its pre-millennium ancestors (Haynes, 2013).

To cope with the evolution of the B2B customers' behavior, B2B marketers must adjust their strategies and tactics to meet B2B customers' expectations. The new breed of B2B customers have new behavioral traits, there should be new rules of engagement to complements the behavior in order to maximize the B2B sales and marketing effectiveness (Haynes, 2013).

Internet is often times the first phase for evaluating products and services for B2B customers. Internet is for sure not the only source from where savvy buyers collect information. However, the Internet is playing an increasingly significant role throughout the B2B buying process with recurring influence. Nowadays, B2B buying process neither starts nor stops at company's website. The first impression has been formed without much saying of the company itself, the initial results and information they receive from major search engine, industry portal and social media determine if the product or service will be taken into buying process (Haynes, 2013).

2.4.2 Social Media for B2B marketing communications

Traditional marketing communication channels are losing the ground; investment on advertising in television, the print media, and events is no longer delivering the return on investment as they used to, simply because customers are spending less than 25% of their time present on those channels. Their attention is caught by social media (Nair and Sidhu, 2009).

More than 133 million blogs indexed since 2002. More than 10 million users create 1,500 new "tweets" every second. 90% of B2B customers are already using social media tools to research and execute purchases (Nair and Sidhu, 2009). Social media can play a major role in B2B marketing.

Social media enables direct interaction with customers using an array of touch points. This two-way and real-time nature adds a highly personal dimension in building B2B relationship. Social media allows multiple people in organization to engage and build relationship with customers and prospects, thereby multiplying the high touch effect.

In addition, social media impels companies expanding the reach to new audience and deepening the understanding of identified leads. B2B market is far smaller than the business to consumers (B2C) market. Monitoring online conversations and easy direct interaction give B2B companies great advances, including noticing the changing trends in the industry, understanding the needs of customers and identifying emerging opportunities without leaving office desk.

At the same time, social media is served as a platform for building business network and sharing knowledge. In B2B arena, people can use this channel to build their network of industry contacts, share insights to build the brand and reputation.

Furthermore, social media channels are where prospects lean to gain an objective and overall image of products and service. B2B customers heavily rely on third-party review in making purchase decisions to reduce buyer-side risk for big-ticket B2B purchases. They tend to trust their colleagues, friends' opinion more than the seller's advertisement.

Moreover, social media engagements are a great platform to consistently build thought leadership. Thought leadership is a must-have in B2B marketing. It differentiates the true experts and leader in the industry, helping to strengthen marketing positioning, and enhancing perceived value to customers. It increases trust, loyalty, brand recognition and the reach in the market.

Importantly, social media is cost efficient. The financial and human resources investment are far less than other traditional media (Nair and Sidhu, 2009).

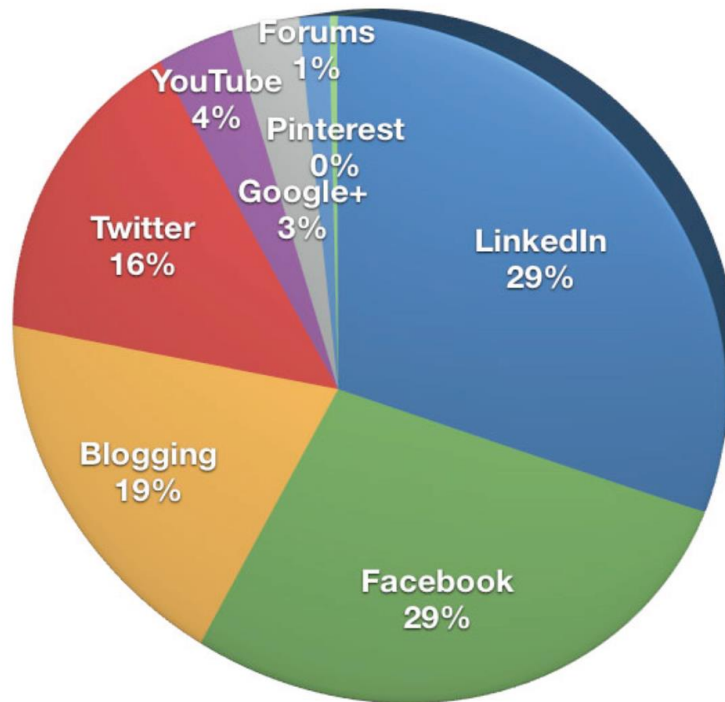


Figure 5: Use of social media sites for B2B marketers in USA (Stelzner, 2013).

As shown in Figure 5, among eight social media sites, LinkedIn and Facebook are the B2B social media platforms of choice in USA. LinkedIn and Facebook are equally favored by 29% of B2B brands marketers. Blogging (19%) follows as the third most popular social media site. 16% B2B marketers in Stelzner (2013)'s research use Twitter as their B2B marketing communication channel. The rest of the social media sites were not very significant B2B marketing communication channels, as they were chosen by less than 5% in the target group.

2.5 B2C companies' assumption vs. customers' expectations in social media

Getting closer to customers is a top priority for CEOs (IBM, 2010). Companies need to be where customers are, with the worldwide explosion of social media usage, businesses are swarming to social media to engage customers. But are customers excited about the same opportunity? In an environment that is structured with two-way dialogue, customers and businesses need to be in sync with each other's expectations and needs (IBM, 2010)?

IBM Institute for Business Value surveyed 1,056 customers worldwide and 350 executives of B2C companies, the survey result indicates that the customers are not as excited as the

business people about customer engagement in social media (Baird and Parasnis, 2011). The main perception gaps between B2C companies and customers are stated below.

2.5.1 Level of engagement

Despite the fact that customers in B2C markets are congregating and adopting social media in an astonishing speed and scale, most of them interact only occasionally (Baird and Parasnis, 2011). Only a small percentage (5%) of customers is considering themselves as Engaged Authors, they actively engages in social media and nearly almost respond to posts and comments. The vast majority (75%) is Casual Participants, occasionally responding or posting their own content. 20% people account for Silent Observers, they have accounts, but they never participate nor contribute to a conversation or post their own content. They observe silently what is happening in social media (Baird and Parasnis, 2011).

2.5.2 Customers' primary use of social media

According to Baird and Parasnis (2011), social media is mostly a personal platform. 70% of customers chose to interact with friends and family, when asked why they go to social media. Only 23% customers indicated that they interact with brands. However, B2C business people are three times more likely to think customers are interested in interacting with brands to feel part of a community (Baird and Parasnis, 2011).

The willingness of engagement in social media differs among groups of customers with different level of engagement. Actively engaged people have the highest tendency to interact with brands (60%). But 92% of them prioritize the "Connecting with friends and family" as the top reason to go to social media (Baird and Parasnis, 2011). In fact more than half (55%) of customers online do not interact with brands via social media at all (Baird and Parasnis, 2011).

2.5.3 Customers' needs in social media

Baird and Parasnis' survey result (2011) shows huge gap between B2C business people's perception and the customers' actual preference in social media. As demonstrated in Figure 6, customers rank "getting discounts or coupons" and "purchasing products and services" as the top two social media activities to engage with brands. The third most popular activity for customers is "reading reviews and product rankings", researching product information and evaluating product options are also part of purchase process. In contrast, business executives list "getting discounts or coupons" and "purchasing products

and services” as the least interested activities for customers, which is exactly opposite of customers’ opinion (Baird and Parasnis, 2011).

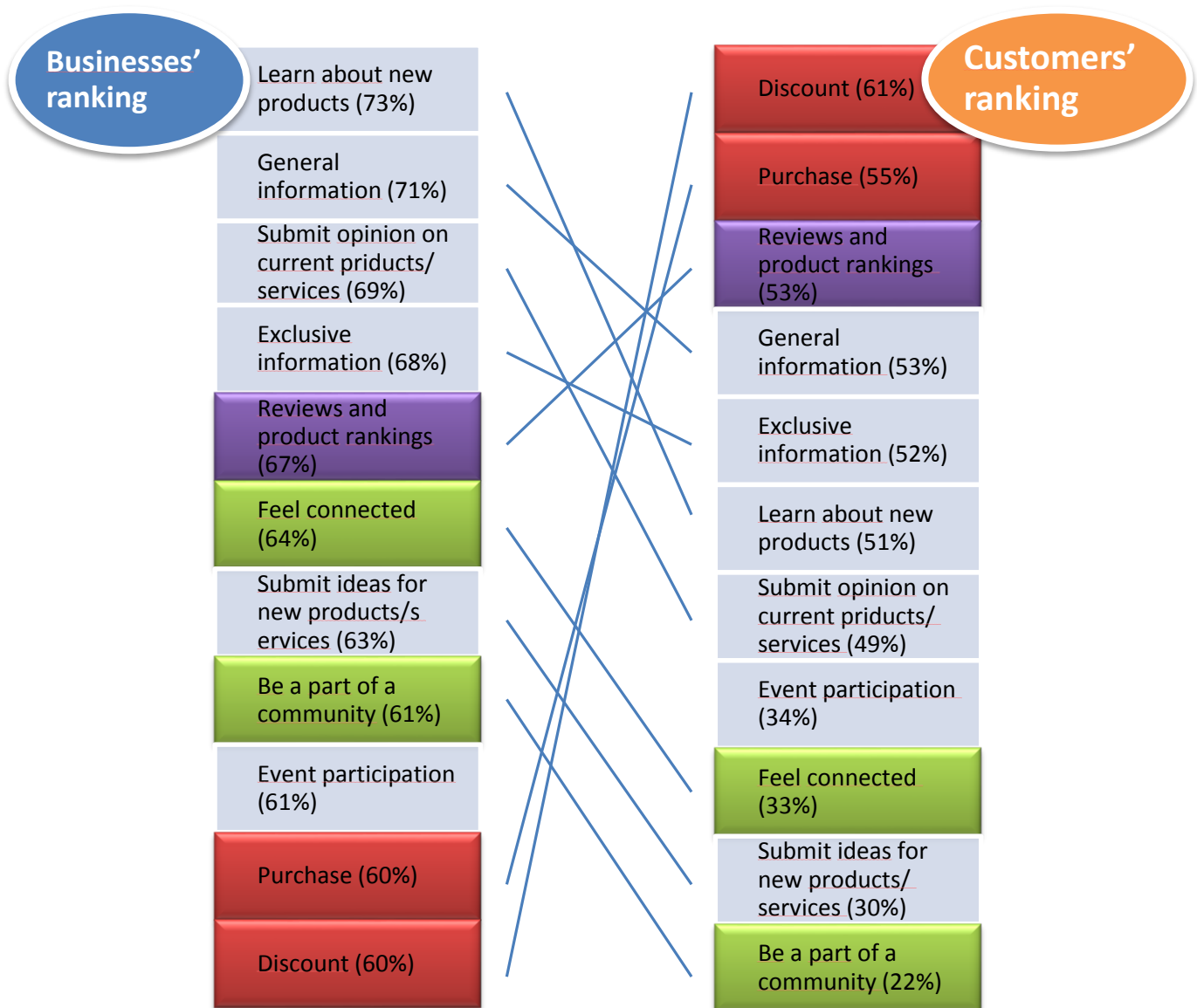


Figure 6: Perception gap between B2C companies and in social media (Baird and Parasnis, 2011), (Customers n = 1,056).

Moreover, B2C companies overestimate customers’ interests to interact with brands. Business people are two times more likely to think customers engage with brands to feel connected (64% vs. 33%) and be a part of a community (61% vs. 22%). Baird and Parasnis (2011) concluded that customers’ willingness to interact with companies is rooted in the belief that it is to their benefits. Customers are using social media as a channel to obtain benefits and values. The benefit could be as a form of discount information or coupons. After being engaged with a company in social media, customers might have the

feeling of intimacy with a brand as a result of tangible gain. But the wish for brand intimacy is not a primary drive for most of the customers.

Despite of great perception gaps between B2C companies and customers in social media, vast opportunities are emerging from social media. Social media can be used as a new source of revenue, engaging customers in social media to generate direct business transactions. Social commerce is quickly becoming a new force in social media due to its cost saving, fast and wide spreading characteristics (Baird and Parasnis, 2011).

2.5.4 Influence of social media interaction

In the IBM Global CEO Study (2010), “getting closer to customers” is a top priority for 88% of B2C companies’ CEOs in the next five years. Do customers feel that the interaction in social media influences their purchase decision and brand loyalty? In Figure 7, 70% executives believe reaching out to customers in social media will increase customer advocacy (Baird and Parasnis, 2011). Only 38% customers agree with the executives; they feel interaction with brands in social media influences their loyalty to the company. (Baird and Parasnis, 2011). Regarding the influence of social interaction on customers purchase, business executives and customers have diverse opinions as well. 65% businesses executives view social media as a new source of revenue. 49% customers agree that social interaction with a company likely leads to future purchase with that company (Baird and Parasnis, 2011).

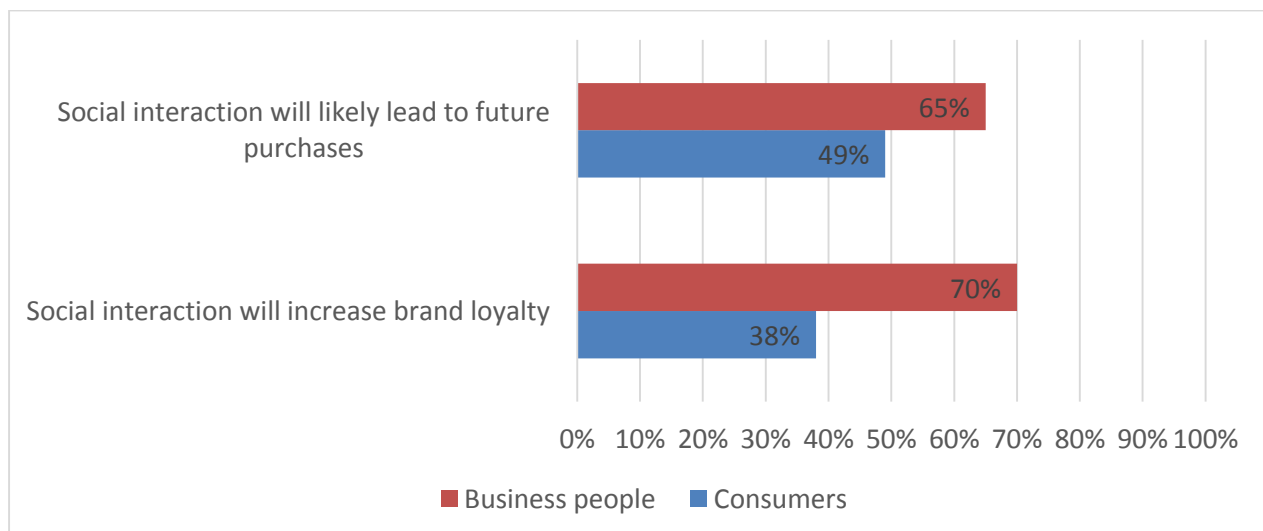


Figure 7: Business people vs. customers’ opinion on the influence of social interaction (Baird and Parasnis, 2011).

2.6 Summary

To summarize the theoretical research, the concept of customer engagement was explored. Brodie et al. (2011) five fundamental propositions (FPs) of customer engagement are used as the definition in this research.

Networking in social media has become the most popular and time consuming online activity. Businesses need to be where customers are. Social media offers vast opportunities for businesses to engage customers. Main social media channels have been identified for personal and business use with distinguishing characteristics. Companies have very little control over the communication, conversations happen among different parties simultaneously, customers are given a job in the marketing content creation process (PwC, 2012).

Customer engagement matrix is proposed by Sashi (2012). Customers are engaged with companies in different levels, the relationship is categorized terms of the degree of relational exchange and emotional bonds: transactional customers, delighted customers, loyal customers, fans. Customer engagement is not a static state, it is built through continuous process of customer engagement cycle. Sashi (2012) proposes a customer engagement cycle which consists of connection, interaction, satisfaction, retention, commitment, advocacy, and engagement.

The concept of Business to Business (B2B) market was discussed. Its unique characteristics, complex deals, large amounts and risky transactions, large key accounts who are critical to company's revenues, close and long-lasting relationship between suppliers and customers, and multiple participants in buying process. With the evolution of B2B customer behavior, B2B customer engagement in social media can bring numerous benefits. However, there are great perception gaps between companies' offering and customers' expectation in social media.

3 Research questions

Social media has become a dominant force in business-to-consumer (B2C) business and is being exploited by some of the world's leading businesses. Being where customers are, companies are using social media as a way of developing relationships with their customers. However, businesses seem not to understand what customers need in social media. Accordingly to Baird and Parasnis research (2011), business people from B2C markets are three times more likely to think customers are interested in interacting with them to feel being part of a community. Customers are more pragmatic that they tend to interact with business if they see benefits. There is great perception gap between what customers expect and what company offers in social media (Baird and Parasnis, 2011). There is no existing statistics on the possible perception gaps between business people and customers in business to business (B2B). In order to increase B2B customer engagement in social media, the possible perception gaps in the B2B market need to be investigated. It leads to the first key research question as below.

Q1. In B2B market, what are the perception gaps between existing customers' preference and company's assumption in social media?

Customers are connecting and having conversations about companies, products and services in social media, whether organizations are actively engaged or not. Brands risk being compromised if they fail to participate (PwC, 2013). Understanding the perceptions gap between companies and customers is the first step. It is critical to find effective ways to engage customers and influence their purchase decisions. Companies need to develop suitable strategy and deploy the best tactics to maximize the potential (PwC, 2013). Tekla, a B2B software company in building and construction industry (Tekla, 2014), is used as the case company in this research. The significance and necessity of social media in terms of customer engagement needs to be determined. Moreover, how social media can contribute to customer engagement need to be identified. Therefore, this research intends to answer the second key question with Tekla as the case company.

Q2. In B2B companies, how to advance and deepen customer engagement utilizing social media?

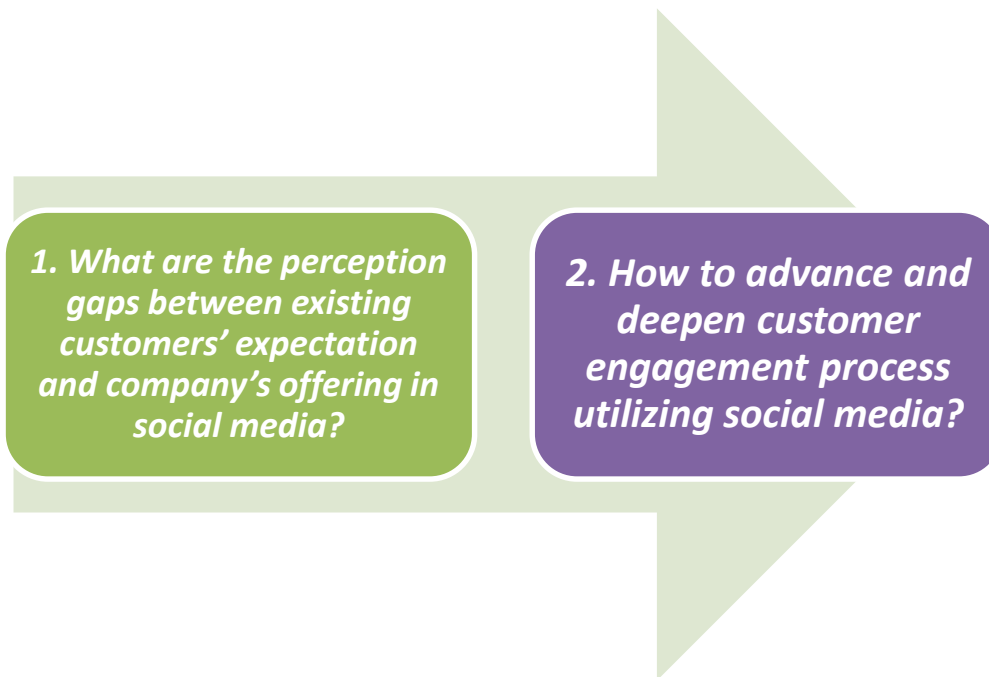


Figure 8: Research questions in this research.

The core research topic, increasing business to business (B2B) customer engagement through social media, is broken down into two research questions as shown in Figure 8. Firstly, the possible perception gaps in the B2B market need to be investigated in order to understand customers' need in social media, thus engage customers. Secondly, the strategies, processes and tactics of advancing and deepening customer engagement process need to be identified and proposed.

4 Material and method

4.1 Research method

Tekla Corporation is the case company in this research. Tekla is a business to business software company. It has global presence with offices in more than twenty countries, a worldwide partner network, and customers in over 100 countries. Tekla employs nearly 600 people. Established in 1966, Tekla produces information modeling software for construction, energy and infrastructure industries. Tekla became part of Trimble Navigation Ltd. in 2011 (<http://www.tekla.com/company/about>, 2014).

Tekla develops software that allows construction industry work more efficiently. Tekla software solution is used to create, combine, manage and distribute accurate, constructable multi-material models of all structures. Tekla software are used from residential buildings and offshore platforms to complex landmark structures (<http://www.tekla.com/company/building-construction>, 2014). Tekla's main customer groups include detailers, steel and precast fabricators, structural engineer and contractors (<http://www.tekla.com/solutions>, 2014). Tekla has a long history in B2B market since 1966. It has a global presence, its offices are located in more than twenty countries, it has a worldwide partner network, and customers in over 100 countries. It has 600 employees (<http://www.tekla.com/company/about>, 2014). Tekla has existing usage of social media as marketing communication channels. Tekla is a suitable case company for this research.

Both qualitative and quantitative research methods were used in data collection.

A quantitative survey research was conducted with both Tekla employees (Teklans) and Tekla's customers. It aims to find out the gaps between Teklans' perception and Tekla customers' expectation. Based on the findings, this research attempts to provide solutions to close the gap and better engage customer in social media. The questionnaire survey was utilized to gather opinions from a broad audience in terms of geographical location, job position and business field. The administration of a survey is cost-efficient. This method can reduce researcher's own bias since the same questions are asked from all respondents (Saunders, et al., 2012). Participants might be more comfortable in answering survey without the interference from the researcher, thus the answers might be more honest and straight forward. In addition, tabulation of closed-ended responses, choices or scoring numbers are easier to process and analysis (Naser, 2013).

In this research, four geographical areas were chosen as the targets: USA, UK, Finland and India.

USA has been the birth place of many social networking sites, such as Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook. USA has high adoption of both the Internet and social media. In the USA, 84% population uses the internet, and 73% of internet users are social networking site users (Rainie and Poushter, 2014). Therefore, USA can be the benchmark for other countries with high internet and social media adoption rate.

Tekla UK has been actively engaging customers in social media channels. Shown in online Tekla Structures UK Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/tekla.structures.uk>, 2014), it was established on February, 2010, one of the first Tekla Facebook pages. The number of fans and followers has been steadily increasing with the consistent effort from the local marketers. First-hand experience can be learnt through UK office.

Finland is another target country since Tekla's headquarter (HQ) is based in Espoo, Finland. Tekla enjoys a great brand awareness in its home market. It is worth knowing audience's opinions in the mature market for Tekla.

India is a fast emerging country. At the same time, India has high social media adoption rate. Indian organizations use social media much more than the global average and their counterparts in emerging economies. In Ernst&Young (2013) report, 95.7% of the surveyed social media-savvy organizations in India use the medium.

In addition to quantitative research method, qualitative research was conducted to gain a deep understanding of the current way of working and offering in Tekla social media as well as necessary actions to take in better engaging customers in social media from Tekla's point of view.

Qualitative research allows exploring topics in-depth and in an interactive manner. Semi-structured interview was adopted for this research. Semi-structured interviews primarily provide more detailed information with the possibility to interact and further explain certain views than other data collection methods, for instance a questionnaire survey. In addition, the standardization of some questions as the general frame of the interview can be replicated to different interviewees, thus increasing data reliability. Moreover, it offers considerable flexibility for a researcher to ask spontaneous questions and further explore certain essential topics sensitive to participants and the researcher (Bogdan and Biklen,

1998). A semi-structured interview might provide a relaxing atmosphere and comfortable environment for interviewee to freely express his/her opinion, and the conversation between the participant and interviewer might inspire more ideas (Bogdan and Biklen, 1998).

4.2 Quantitative research method

A questionnaire survey was made based on IBM Institute for Business Value (2010) and Baird and Parasnis (2011) for both Tekla employees (Teklans) and Tekla customers. Both of the target groups were asked the same set of questions. The aim was to investigate the perception gap between Teklans' assumption and customers' real preference in social media. The questions covers their preferences in social media channels, their usage of social media, their reasons not to engage with brands in social media as well as the precondition to engage with brands in social media. The questionnaire surveys for Teklans and Tekla customers were shown in Appendix 1 and 2 respectively.

4.2.1 Data collection

The online questionnaire survey was made with Google Form. 50 out of 56 customer respondents and all 42 Tekla respondents conducted the survey online. 6 customer respondents filled the questionnaire survey in paper and typed by the researcher to Google Form.

Surveys in Finland were collected during Tekla technical user day in April, 2013. The survey was given to randomly selected people in this conference. This conference invited customers only; most of them are technical users of Tekla software. However, it did have a mix of engineers, designers, technical managers and decision makers. 40 people were given surveys in paper with a small gift as an incentive to participate the survey, and 22 people have filled in the survey. The result was input manually by the researcher in the Google form. Tekla USA marketing manager helped to send the survey link to their customers randomly in USA via emails. As a result, 10 customers filled in the survey online in Google form. In India, the survey link was posted in Facebook page of Tekla Structures India, which was "liked" by 610 people at that moment. In addition, the survey link was sent to a few customers through email by Tekla India marketing specialist. 16 answers were received online. In UK, survey links were sent to customers via emails by Tekla UK marketers. However, there was no response. Then the survey links were given

to customers who came to Tekla UK office for Tekla software technical training during May, 2013. At the end of the training session, the survey was explained by the Tekla UK trainer in the class, and the survey link was given to the participants. As a result, 8 answers were received.

A separate online questionnaire survey was sent to Teklans in Espoo, Finland and Tekla global marketing team. 42 Teklans filled in the online questionnaire survey.

4.2.2 Respondents' background

42 Tekla employees from Tekla headquarter, Espoo, Finland, gave their opinions on how customers use social media. At the same time, 56 customers responded to the questionnaire survey from target countries. The background of customers are presented in Figure 9.

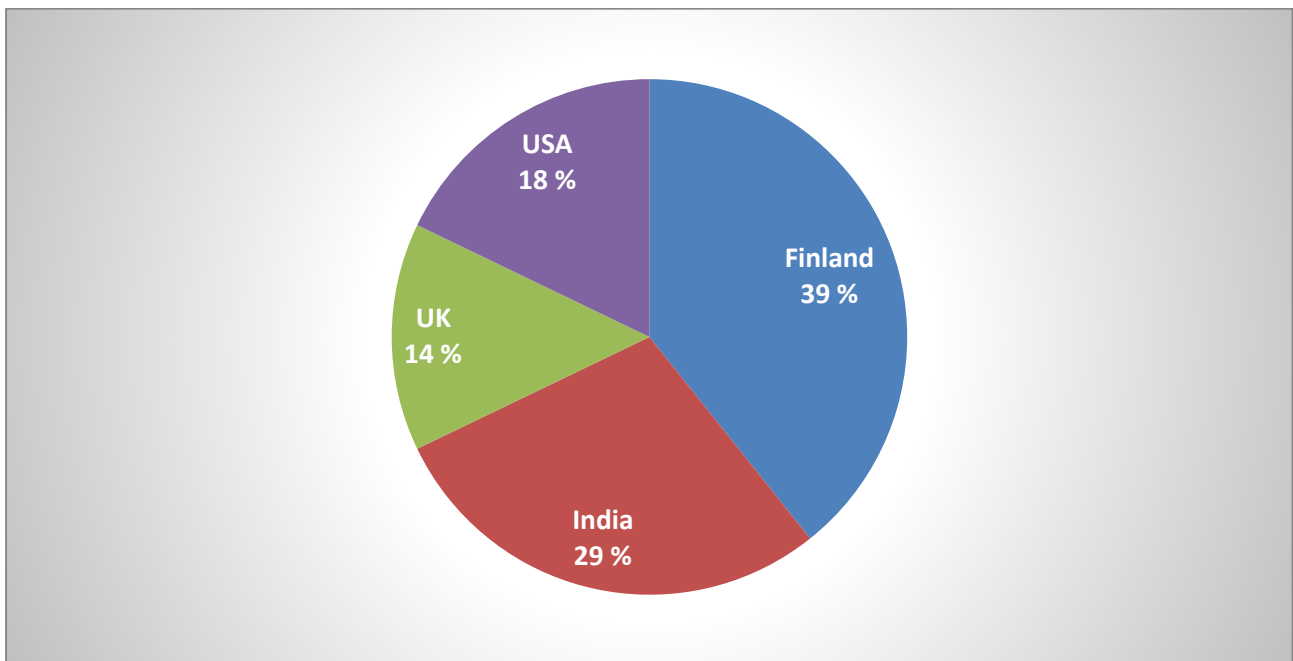


Figure 9: Country distribution of customer respondents in Finland (n=22), India (n=16), UK (n=8) and USA (n=10).

As shown in Figure 9, Finland has the highest number of respondent 22 (39%). Followed by India with 16 respondents (29%) in this questionnaire survey. USA and UK have 10 (18%) and 8 (14%) respondents respectively.

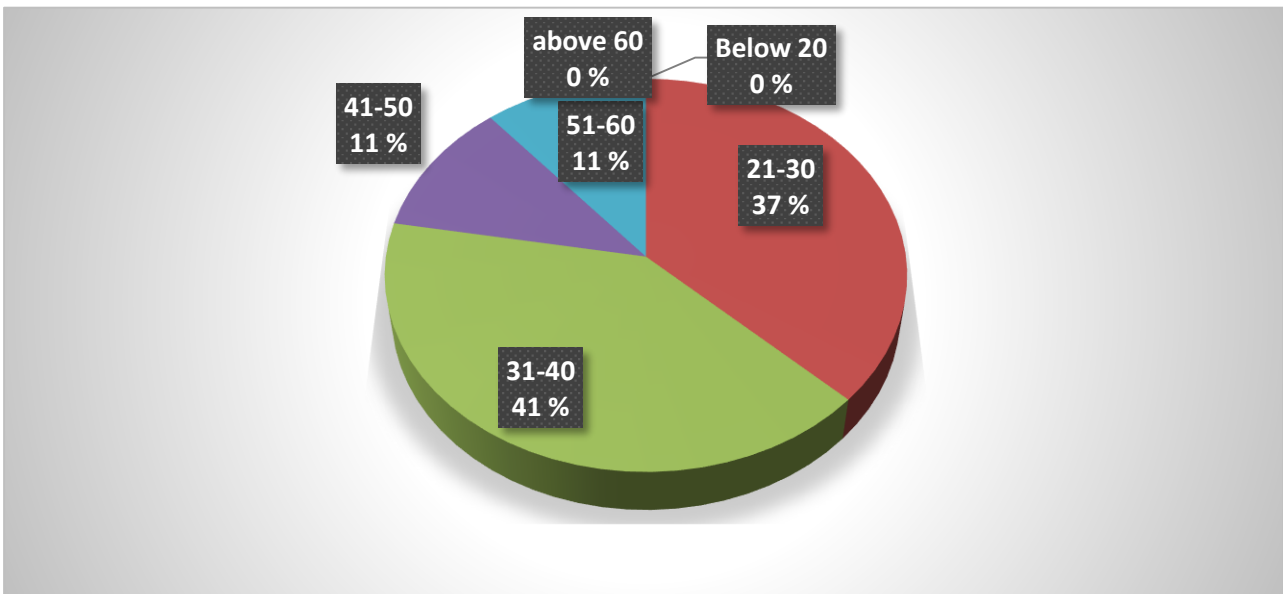


Figure 10: Age distribution of customers in the survey (n = 56).

As shown in Figure 10, 21 customers (37%) were between the age group of 21-30, 23 people (41%) were between 31 and 40 years old. The majority (78%) of the survey questionnaire is from 21 to 40 years old, who probably will stay in the industry for the next 20 years.

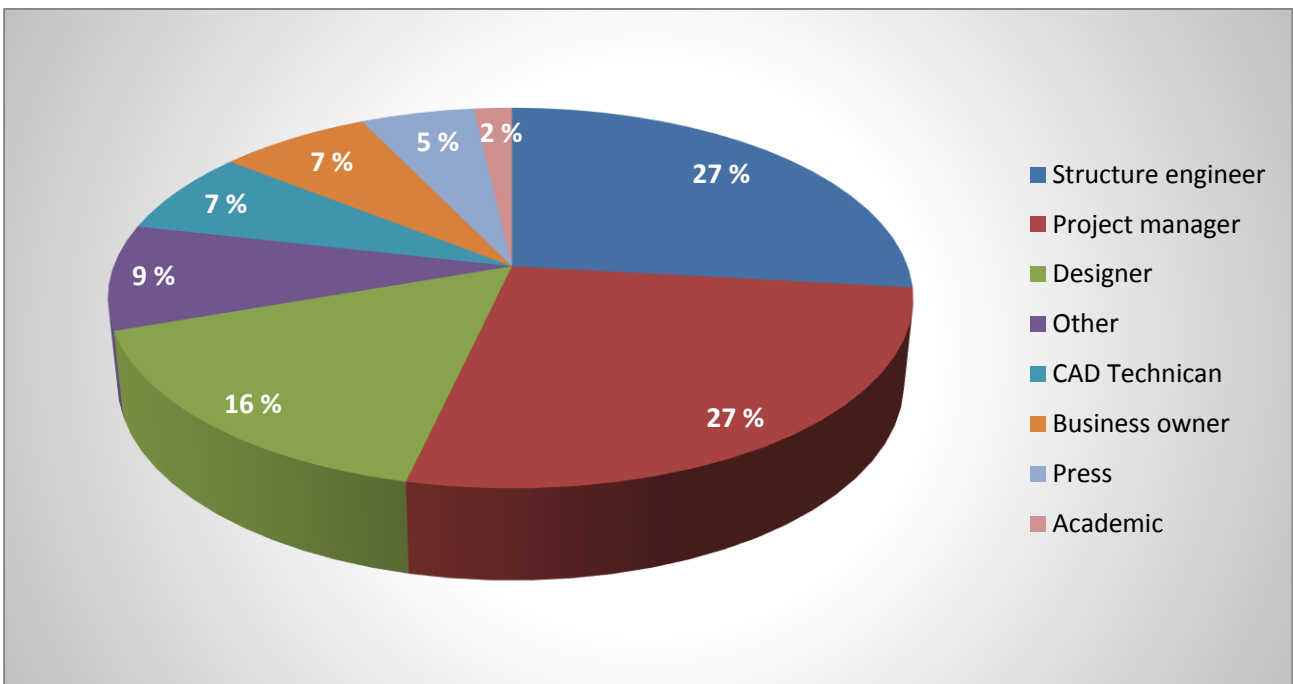


Figure 11: Profession distribution of customer respondents (n=56).

The respondents of the questionnaire survey consist of Tekla customers in different positions as shown in Figure 11. 15 structure engineers (27%) and 15 project managers (27%) account for the top two groups of professions in this questionnaire survey. Followed by 9 designers (16%), and 4 business owners (7%). Therefore, decision makers and Tekla software users are the majority of the respondents.

4.2.3 Data analysis

Data were transferred from Google forms to Excel for further comparison. The comparison was done between the data from Tekla customers and Teklans. At the same time, the data among different target countries were compared. In addition, IBM SPSS software was used to conduct statistical analysis.

4.3 Qualitative research method

4.3.1 Interviews

Interviews were conducted with five Tekla employees (Teklans). By interviewing Teklans, a comprehensive understanding was gained of the Tekla's social media current usage. The interviews covered Tekla social media strategy, channels, processes, personnel, benefits and challenges. In addition, social media trend in the industry was discussed, the future development and suggestion were proposed during the interviews. Each interviews lasted from 45 minutes to 1 hour.

Three people were from headquarters and two persons were from Tekla area offices. From Tekla headquarters (HQ), web content coordinator from Tekla Building and Construction (B&C) marketing team was interviewed. She was responsible for content creation in Twitter and Facebook, and she had drafted Tekla social media strategy. She was the best person to talk about Tekla's current social media presence, usage and challenges. Another interviewee from Tekla HQ was marketing manager from Tekla B&C marketing team. He was previously the marketing manager of Tekla United States (Tekla USA), he understands Tekla social media's practice from both headquarter and Tekla USA. He was the best person to interview regarding USA customers' social media preference and habits. At the same time, he has extensive experience in creating content in Twitter, Facebook and Youtube. The third interviewed person from Tekla HQ was a software product Tekla BIMsight marketing manager. He is responsible for a product's Facebook page. He has a lot of first-hand experience in interacting with customers both

online and offline. Furthermore, he has great insights of the industry's development and knowledge of Tekla's customers' online behavior and preference.

From Tekla area offices, the former marketing manager of Tekla South East Asia (Tekla SEA) was interviewed. She left Tekla shortly after the interview in June, 2013. She managed marketing activities across a broad region, including Singapore, Korea, Vietnam, Indonesia, Philippines. She had a lot of experience dealing with Tekla customers and resellers. She was also responsible for Tekla SEA Facebook page. The other interviewee was marketing and design coordinator from Tekla United Kingdom (Tekla UK). She has been working in Tekla for 11 years. She has been running Tekla UK Facebook page since it was created. She is very experienced with the process of content localization between Tekla headquarter and area. The experience and challenges in customer interaction in social media can be learnt from her.

4.3.2 Interview structure

Each person was interviewed by the researcher in a semi-structured way. A pre-defined list of questions served as the guideline of the interview, the list of questions are listed.

1. Considering social media sites in general, how important it is for Tekla to have a presence and being active?
2. Do you use social media in your work? For which project? In which social media channels your project is present? (Facebook, twitter, LinkedIn etc.)
3. What is the role of social media regarding customer engagement in your project? How do you use it to engage customers?
4. What is the synergy with other projects? Do you interact with other online projects or other Tekla social media accounts?
5. What benefits and new opportunities have social media brought?
6. What are the challenges of customer engagement in social media?
7. How to advance customer engagement process? What can be done or improved in the future?

4.3.3 Data analysis

The interviews were recorded and transcribed. The transcription only include complete thoughts and useful information for this research. The qualitative data was coded into categories in order to organize large amounts of text and discover patterns.

The researcher followed the coding method of Bogdan and Biklen (1998). Atlas.ti was used as the qualitative coding and data analysis software for this research. The data was carefully read before coding. Firstly, initial coding was conducted while going through the data. More than 60 category codes were labeled and related in Atlas software. Meanwhile notes and summaries were written down alone side the data. Next, focused coding was used to eliminate and combine coding categories. The repeated ideas were eliminated and similar coding categories were combined and some categories were subdivided, close and repeating ideas were organized and grouped into a larger topic as theme. Last, diagrams were draw in Atlas software to illustrate the relationship among the themes and subcategories. Eventually, nine themes were formed based on the interview data. The themes are: customers vs. Tekla employees' social media usage, importance of being present in social media, Tekla's audience in social media, social media channels, corporate identity in social media, content creation, synergy among Tekla offices and projects in social media, challenges in social media, and new ideas in social media.

5 Results

5.1 Customers vs. business people' social media usage

Surveys were conducted online for Tekla customers in Finland, India, UK and USA. They answered their usage of social media, including how they value and rank different activities in social media, the reasons not to engage in social media. The same set of questions was asked from Tekla employees (Teklans), their assumption of customers' social media preference and behavior were studied. The aim was to investigate possible perception gaps between customers' preference and Teklan's expectation. In addition, the countries were compared in terms of social media use.

5.1.1 Customers' usage of social media sites

There is strong social media site preference for customers for both business and leisure purpose.

For business usage of social media, as shown in Figure 12, 27 customers chose LinkedIn as the channels where they are active for business purpose, which accounts for 48% of the total sample. LinkedIn is the clearly the leading social media site for business usage. Followed by Facebook, 17 customer are active for business purpose which is 30% of the total respondent.

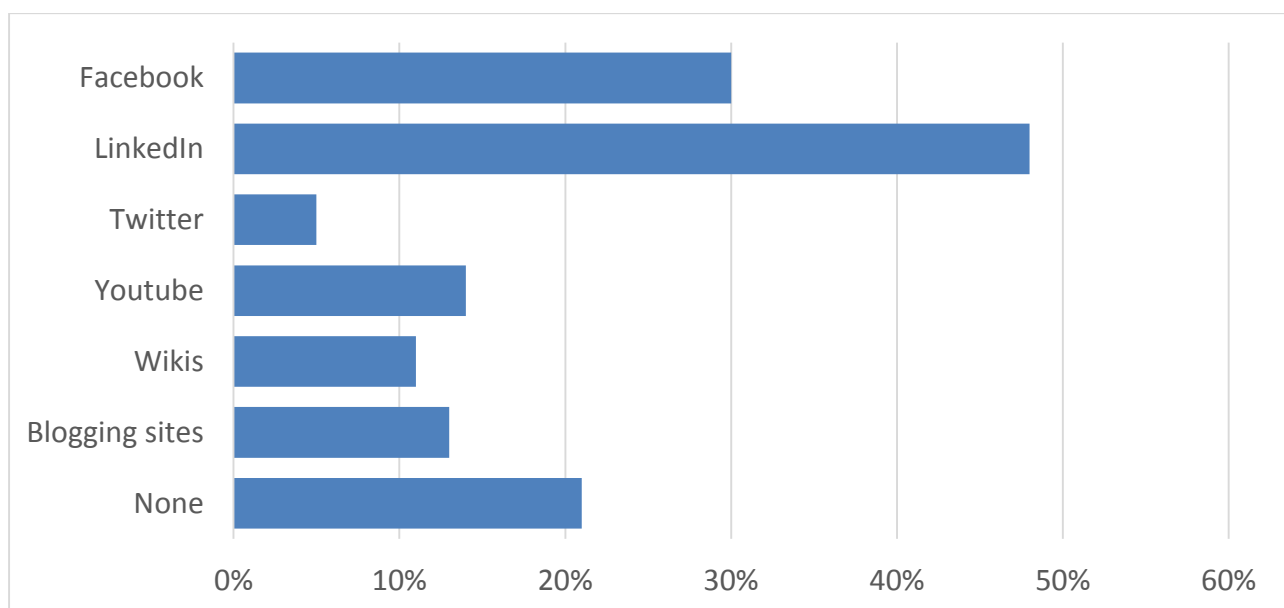


Figure 12: Customers' usage of social media sites for business (n = 56).

As shown in Figure 13, 40 customers (70% of the total respondents) stated that they are active in Facebook for leisure. Another popular channel is Youtube with 22 customers choosing it, which is 39% of the customer respondents.

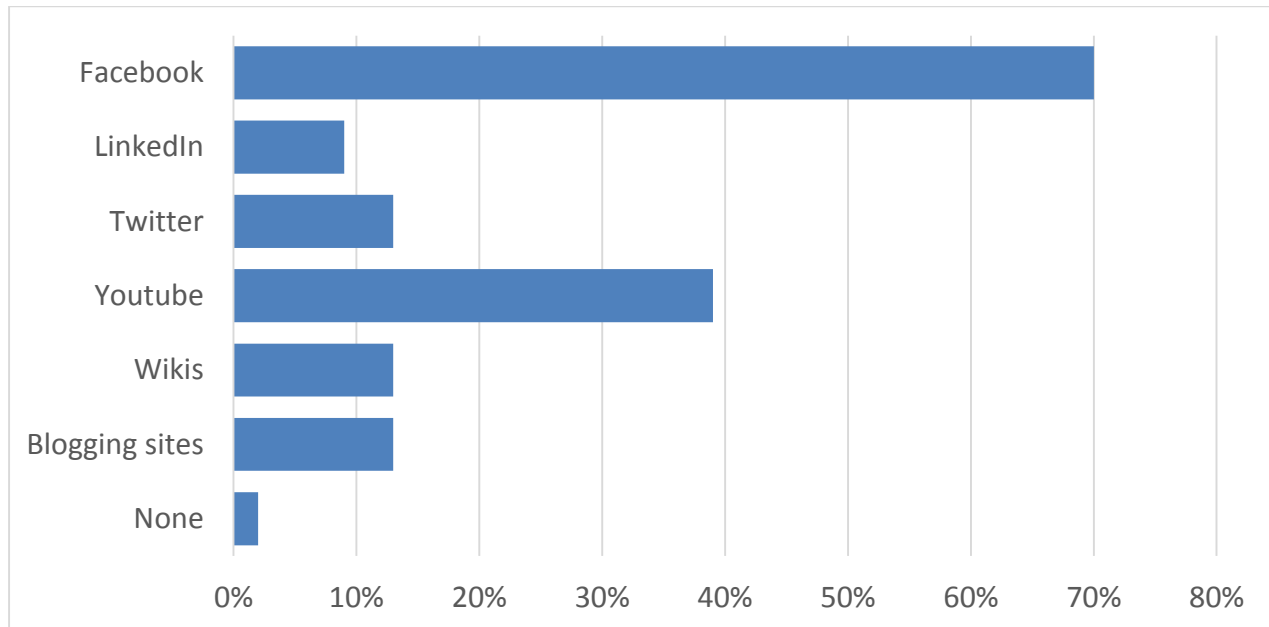


Figure 13: Customers' usage of social media sites for leisure (n = 56).

5.1.2 Customers' usage vs. business people' expectation

Customers were given a list of activities and were asked which activities they would do in social media in general. Teklans was given the same list and asked to answer the question from customers' point of view. The following activities were included in the list:

- Connect with friends and family
- Read news
- Access entertainment (games etc.)
- Share opinion (posts, blogs etc.)
- Access reviews (product, movies, hotels etc.)
- Meet people
- Share media (pictures, videos etc.)
- Research for work (marketing intelligence etc.)
- Get deals
- Interact with brands (being proud and associated with brands)
- Network for work and career
- Search jobs

Based on the results, there are great perception gaps between customers' preference of social media activities and Teklan's expectation. Firstly, Teklans expect the customers to have a significantly higher interest to engage with business in social media. In the list of activities, except "Connect with friends and family", the other activities are considered to be business-related activities. According to the survey result, Teklans expect customers to engage with business activities on average 56%. However, customers are willing to engage on average 19%.

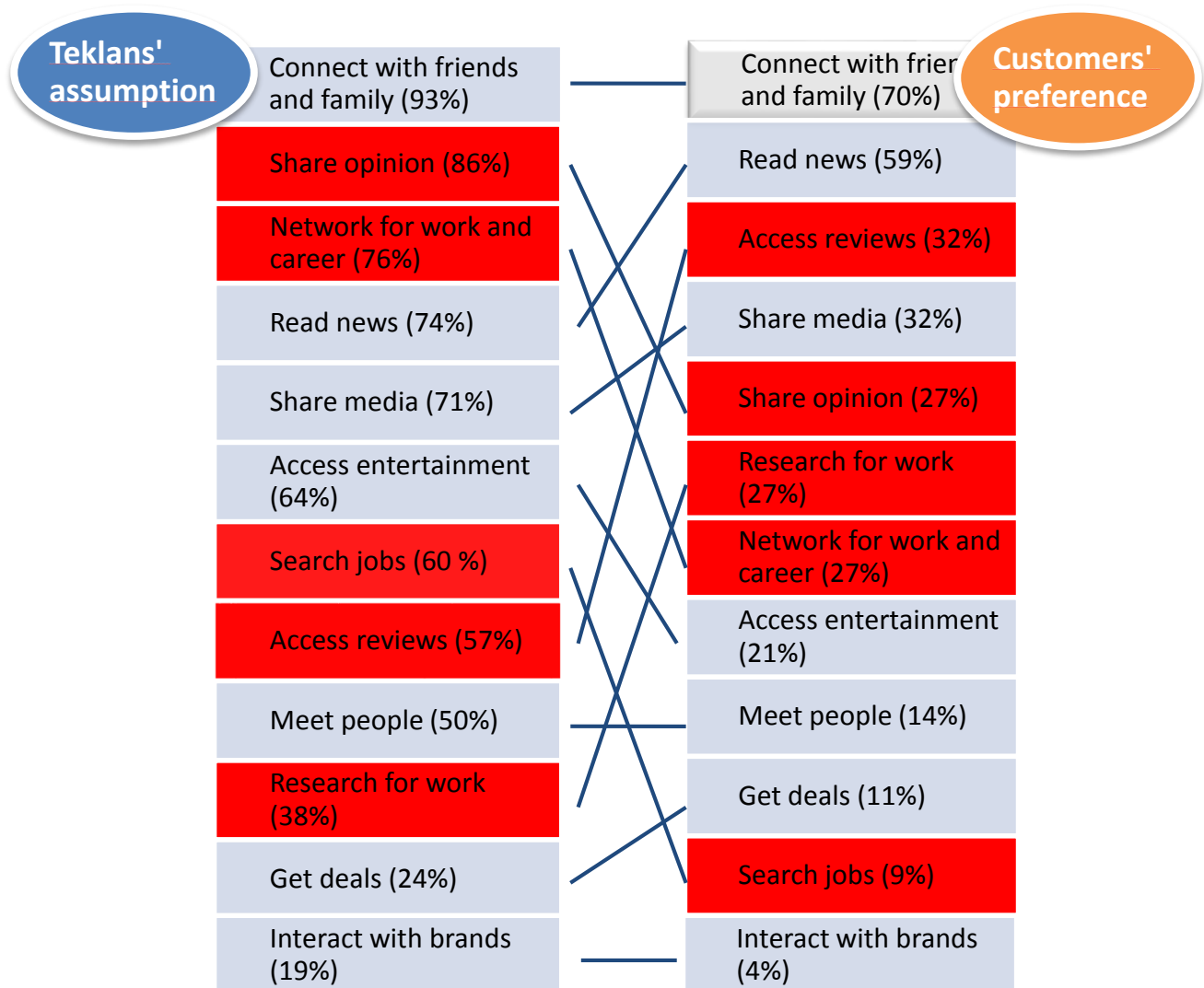


Figure 14: The usage of social media for customers (n=56) vs. Teklans' (n=42).

Secondly, different opinions were held of which activities are popular in social media. As demonstrated in Figure 14, the top four most popular activities among customers are "Connect with friends and family" (70%, n=40), "Read news" (59%, n=33), "Access reviews" (32%, n=18), and "Share media" (32%, n=18). Over 30% (n = 17) of customers chose the above mentioned activities in social media. However, the top four activities that

Teklans assumed customers would engage in social media are “Connect with friends and family” (93%, n=39), “Share opinion” (86%, n=36), “Network for work and career” (76%, n=32) and “Read news” (74%, n=31).

In addition, Teklans’ assumptions of the importance and popularity of several activities in social media are different from those of customers. 86% (n=36) Teklans expect customers to “Share opinion” in social media, resulting as the second most popular activity. However, only 27% customers, 15 out of 56 customers say they “Share opinion” in social media, which is the fifth most popular activity for customers. Misperception happened for “Network for work and career” as well. 76% (n=32) Teklans vs. 27% (n = 15) customers chose this activity. As a result, “Network for work and career” expected by Teklans to be the third most popular activity. Whereas for customer, it is only the 7th in the ranking. 50% Teklans (n=21) are overly optimistic about customers’ willingness to “Search job” in social media. Only 9% (n = 5) customer said they “Search jobs” in social media. This activity is the 7th most popular from Teklans’ point of view, and customers ranked it as 11th, which is the second last in the whole list. On the other hand, Teklans underestimated certain activities’ popularity. “Access reviews” was the 8th most popular activity in Teklans’ popularity. However, customers ranked “Access reviews” as the 3rd most popular activity. Furthermore, Teklans were more pessimistic about “Research for work”, Teklans have this activity as the 10th most popular, but the results from customers show it is the 6th most popular activity.

5.1.3 Customers’ rank of social media activities

Customers were asked to scale the importance of social media activities from 1 to 5, where 1 indicates “unimportant”, 2 indicates “slightly important”, 3 indicates “important”, 4 means “very important”, and 5 means “critical”. It intended to investigate why customers engage with business in social media and how importance certain activities are to customers. The activities were modified from IBM Institute for Business Value (2010).



Figure 15: The importance of social media activities for customers (scale from 1 to 5).

As shown in Figure 15, three activities were scaled on average above 3, which is the bar of being “important”. “Learn about new products” ($\bar{x} = 3,45$) was indicated as the most important reason why customers engage with business in social media. Customers would like to learn about the recent product development and news of the company through social media. Followed by “Review general information” with a mean of 3,32. In addition to traditional channels, such as website and magazines, social media is becoming an important gate through which customer learn about the company, product portfolio and services. The third most important reason is “review product comments and rankings” ($\bar{x} = 3,29$) in social media. Customers constantly evaluate different competing products and services as well as gaining the knowledge of how others view certain brand.

Four activities were scored below 2,5 on the average as the least significant reasons to engage with business in social media. “Purchase goods” ($\bar{x} = 2,46$), “Submit ideas for new product/services” ($\bar{x} = 2,46$), “Connect with brands” ($\bar{x} = 2,41$) and “Get discount” ($\bar{x} = 2,32$) are the least popular activities in social media.

5.1.4 Customers vs. business people' rank of social media activities

In order to identify any possible perception gaps between customers' opinion and Teklans' assumption, Teklans were given the same list of activities that was given to customers. Teklans were asked what the customers would scale social media activities from 1 to 5 in terms of importance. 1 indicates "Unimportant", 2 indicates "slightly important", 3 indicates "important", 4 means "very important", and 5 means "critical".

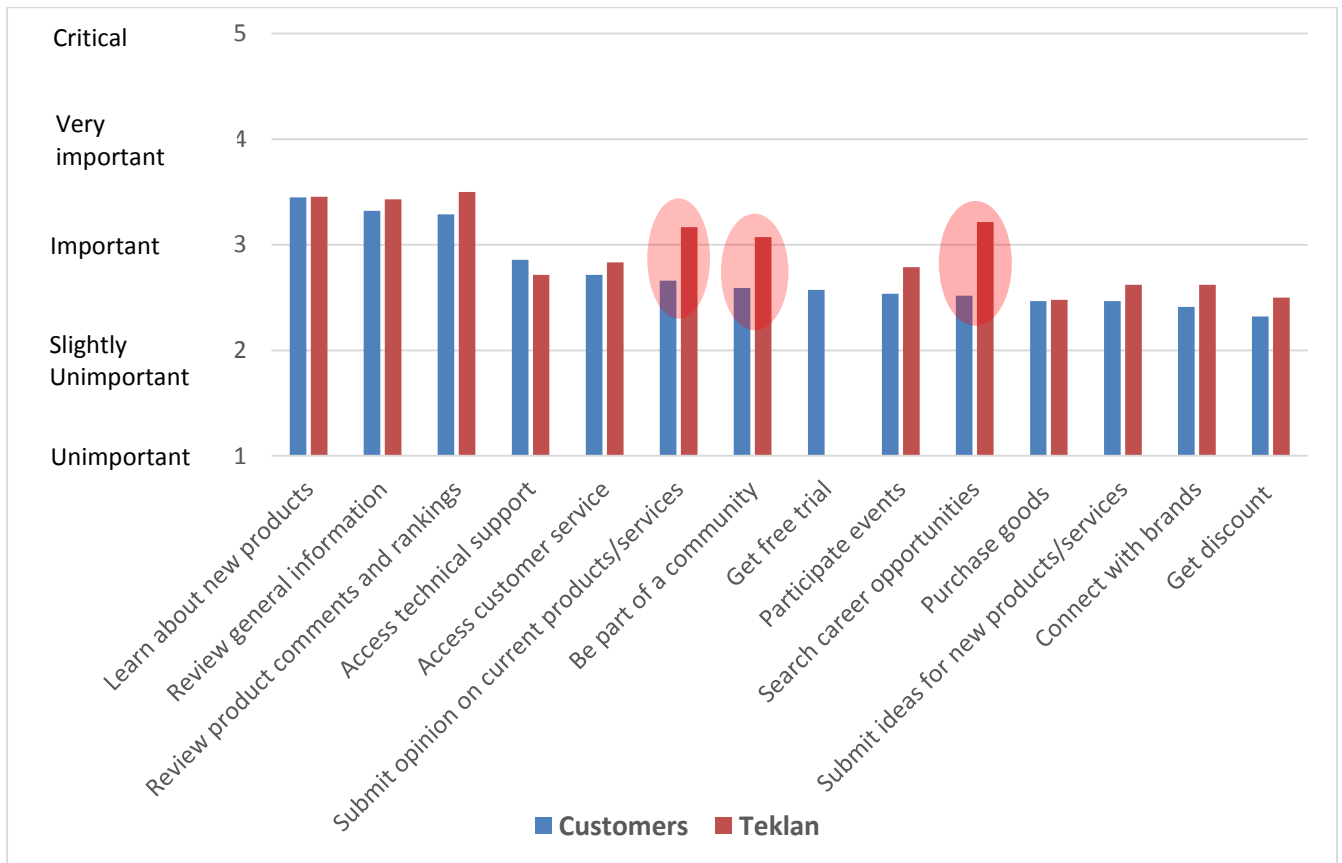


Figure 16: Customer's (n=56) view vs. Teklan's (n=42) view on the importance of social media activities (scale from 1 to 5).

The results shown in Figure 15 indicate that there are some perception gaps between customers' interests and Teklans' expectation. In general, Teklans have good comprehension of the significance of each activity for customers. However, Teklans expected more interest than customers on three activities. The mean of "submit opinion on current product/services" for customers is 2,66. It is below 3, which is the bar of being "important". Teklans have a mean of 3,17 for this activity. The same pattern appeared for "being part of a community", customers ($\bar{x} = 2,59$) vs. Teklans ($\bar{x} = 3,07$), and "search career opportunities", customers ($\bar{x} = 2,66$) vs. Teklans ($\bar{x} = 3,17$).

Table 3: Customer vs. Teklans T-test result.

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Learn	Equal variances assumed	,652	,421	-,029	96	,977	-,00595	,20225	-,40741	,39551
	Equal variances not assumed			-,030	93,558	,976	-,00595	,19851	-,40013	,38823
generalinfo	Equal variances assumed	,759	,386	-,588	96	,558	-,10714	,18222	-,46884	,25456
	Equal variances not assumed			-,580	83,618	,563	-,10714	,18474	-,47454	,26026
comments	Equal variances assumed	2,495	,118	-1,039	96	,301	-,21429	,20616	-,62352	,19495
	Equal variances not assumed			-1,077	95,841	,284	-,21429	,19901	-,60932	,18075
technicalsupport	Equal variances assumed	1,760	,188	,603	96	,548	,14286	,23701	-,32761	,61333
	Equal variances not assumed			,615	93,885	,540	,14286	,23226	-,31832	,60403
customerservice	Equal variances assumed	2,815	,097	-,507	96	,614	-,11905	,23502	-,58556	,34747
	Equal variances not assumed			-,517	93,865	,606	-,11905	,23033	-,57639	,33830
submitopinion	Equal variances assumed	1,218	,273	-2,271	96	,025	-,50595	,22282	-,94824	-,06367
	Equal variances not assumed			-2,313	93,516	,023	-,50595	,21875	-,94031	-,07160
community	Equal variances assumed	2,057	,155	-1,839	96	,069	-,48214	,26215	-1,00251	,03822
	Equal variances not assumed			-1,885	94,648	,063	-,48214	,25581	-,99001	,02572
events	Equal variances assumed	8,462	,005	-1,160	96	,249	-,25000	,21550	-,67777	,17777
	Equal variances not assumed			-1,225	95,036	,224	-,25000	,20414	-,65526	,15526
career	Equal variances assumed	1,173	,282	-3,144	96	,002	-,69643	,22151	-1,13613	-,25673
	Equal variances not assumed			-3,171	91,043	,002	-,69643	,21965	-1,13273	-,26012
purchase	Equal variances assumed	,332	,566	-,056	96	,955	-,01190	,21082	-,43039	,40658
	Equal variances not assumed			-,056	83,720	,956	-,01190	,21368	-,43686	,41305
submitideas	Equal variances assumed	5,866	,017	-,722	96	,472	-,15476	,21432	-,58019	,27067
	Equal variances not assumed			-,755	95,926	,452	-,15476	,20498	-,56166	,25213
connectwbrands	Equal variances assumed	,159	,691	-,886	96	,378	-,20833	,23520	-,67521	,25854
	Equal variances not assumed			-,891	90,303	,375	-,20833	,23382	-,67284	,25617
discount	Equal variances assumed	,000	,991	-,768	96	,445	-,17857	,23266	-,64039	,28325
	Equal variances not assumed			-,765	87,496	,446	-,17857	,23334	-,64232	,28517

T-test was run in SPSS to compare the two groups. If the significance level (as highlighted in yellow in Table 3) is smaller than 0,05, it means that there is a significant gap between the two sets of data, customers and Teklans' perception. As show in Table 3, significant value of "submit opinion on current products/services (0,025) is less than 0,05, so is the significant value of "search for career opportunities" (0,002). Therefore, there is significant difference between Tekla customers' and Teklans' opinions in the usage of social media to submit opinion on current products and career search. The significant value of "be part of a

community” (0,069) is slightly greater than 0,05. Therefore, there is indicatively statistical difference between Teklans’ assumption and Tekla customers’ expectation on this issue.

5.1.5 Barriers and precondition to engage with brands

The possible reasons preventing customer engaging with companies in social media and the preconditions to engage were investigated. Customers and Teklans both gave their answers.

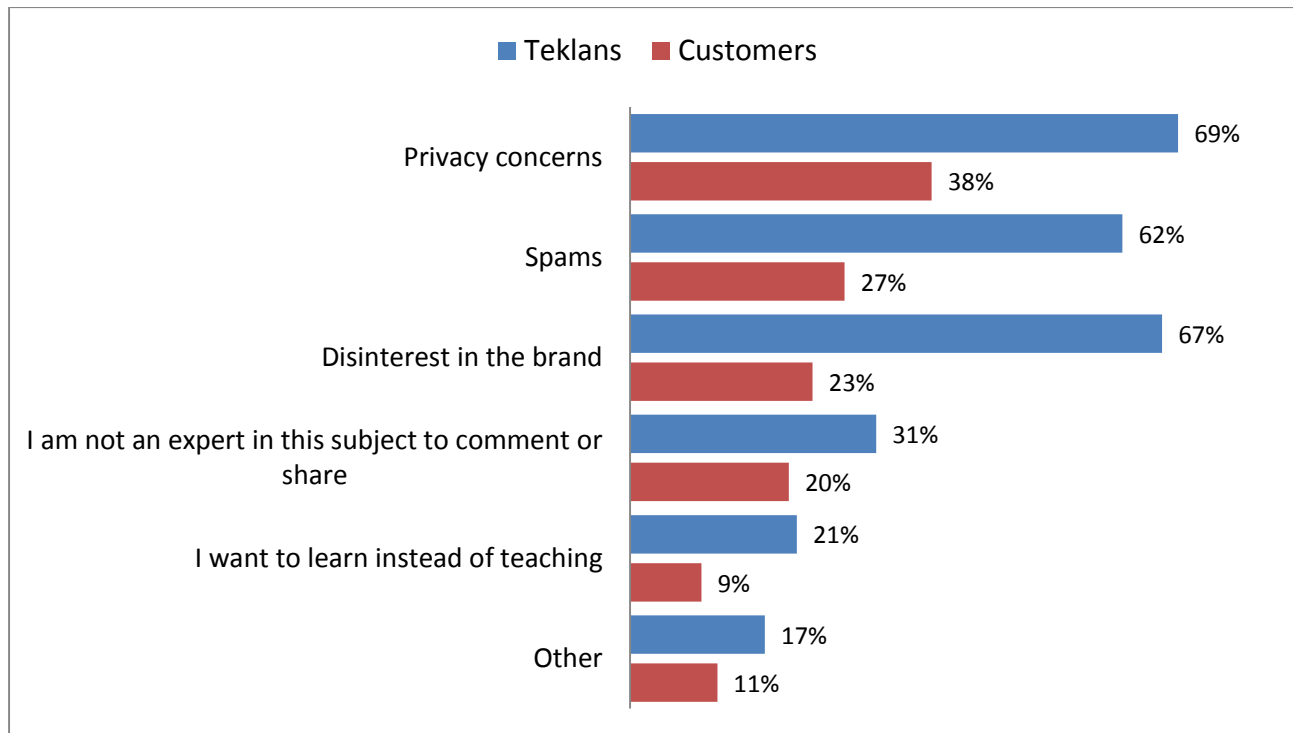


Figure 17: Teklan’s (n=42) vs customers’ (n=56) opinion on why not engage with brands in social media.

The top three reasons given by Teklans were “Privacy concerns” chosen by 29 Teklans (69%), “Disinterest in the brand” from 29 Teklan (67%) and “Spams” with 26 Teklan chose it (62%). It matches the top three reasons from customers’ side, however, there is lower percentage of customers chosen any of the options. For instance, only 38% (n=21) customers chose “Privacy concerns” as the reason not to engage with social media, which is the top reason. 15 customer chose “Spams” and 13 customers chose “Disinterest in the brand”, which only account for 27% and 23% of the total customer respondents respectively.

In addition to the barriers of engaging with brands in social media, the preconditions in order to engage with brands were also asked for both Teklans and customers. It intended to investigate the motives to engage with brands in social media.

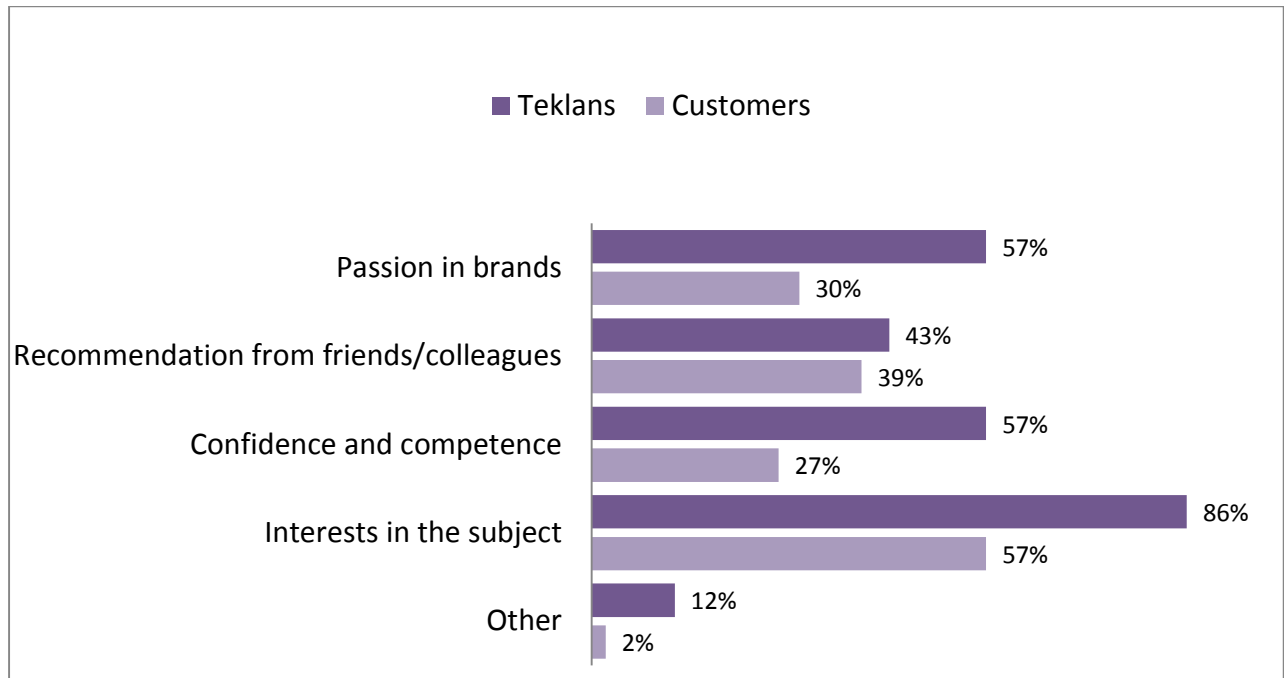


Figure 18: Teklans (n=42) vs. Customers (n=56) opinion on precondition to engage with brands in social media

“Interests in the subject” was chosen by 32 (57%) customers as the precondition to engage, it gives brands the confidence and great possibility to engage with the audience who do not know the brand. In addition, it is the “wake-up call” of content marketing in social media. The second most important precondition is “recommendation from friends/colleagues”. It shows the power of word of mouth in social media, and it is critical to have brand ambassadors who are ready to tell their colleagues and friends about the brand.

5.1.6 Influence of interaction with brands

Both Teklans and customers were given two statements regarding the influence of interaction with brands in social media.

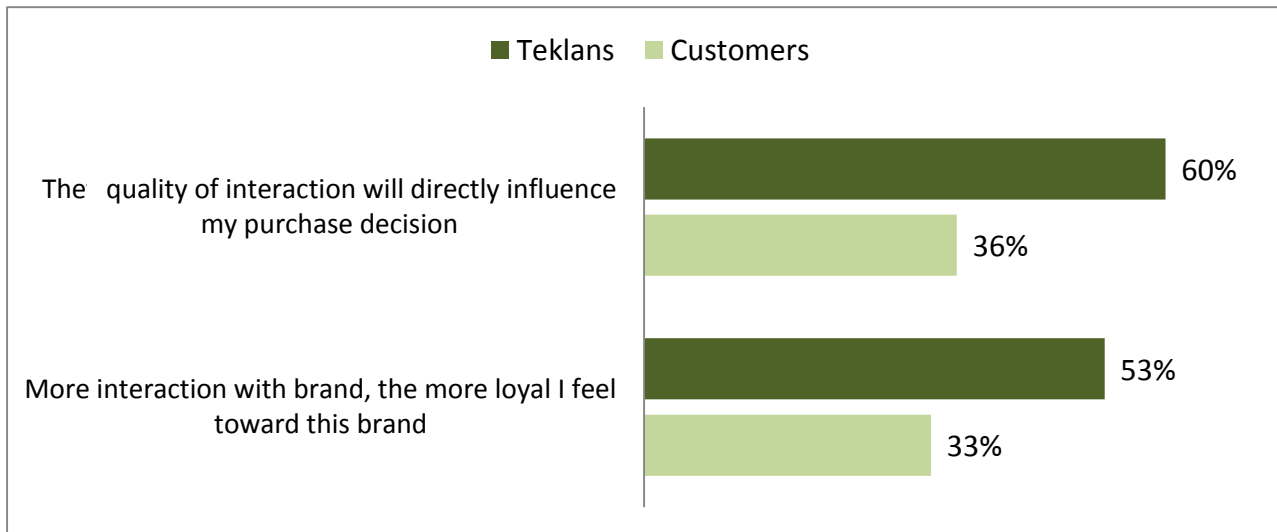


Figure 19: Teklans (n=42) vs. customers (n=56) opinion on the influence of interaction with brands in social media.

As shown in Figure 19, higher percentage of Teklans than the customers tend to think that the interaction in social media has more influence on customer's purchase decision and brand loyalty. 20 (36%) customers feel the quality of interaction will directly influence their purchase decision, 25 (60%) Teklans think there is relation between quality of interaction and purchase decision. 18 (33%) customers feel more loyal if they interact more with brands, whereas 22 (53%) Teklans agree that more interaction leads to greater loyalty toward brands.

5.1.7 Social media usage in Finland, India, UK and USA

The questionnaire surveys were filled by Tekla customers in four countries, Finland, India, UK and USA. The country specific answers were compared to investigate the different social media usage and preferences in the target countries. Customers rated the importance of having a presence and being active in social media for companies from 1 to 5. Where 1 indicates "Not important at all", and 5 indicates "Extremely important".

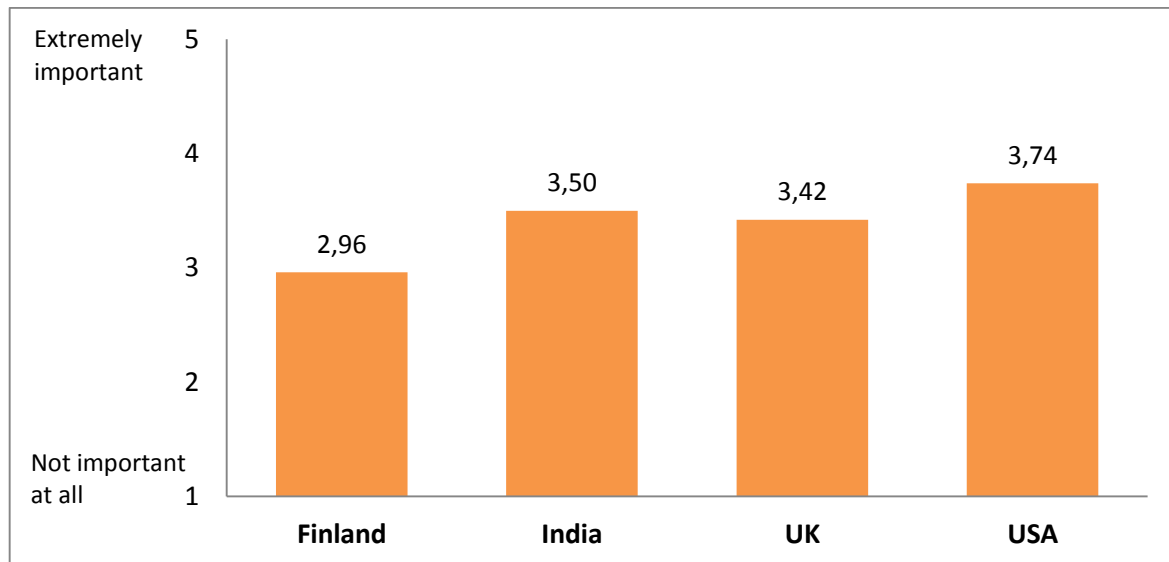


Figure 20: The importance of having a presence and being active in social media in Finland (n=22), India (n=16), UK (n=8) and USA (n=10) from the scale 1 to 5.

As shown in the Figure 20, USA has the highest score ($\bar{x}=3,74$), followed by India ($\bar{x}=3,50$), UK is closely behind with a mean of 3,42. The scores of being active in social media for business are above 3 in those countries, above the bar of being important. It indicates that it is important to have presence to be active in social media in India, UK and USA. Tekla should definitely utilize this opportunity to engage with customers in social media. Finland has the lowest mean of 2,96, below 3 the bar of being important. It indicates that the interest to be active in social media for business in Finland is lower than the other countries in this research

The popularity of different social media sites in the target countries were also compared as shown in Figure 21. LinkedIn is the overall favored social media site for business, it was chosen by the highest percentage of customers from 3 out of 4 countries. Followed by Facebook, it is the second preferred social media site in 2 out of 4 countries and the first choice for business use in India.

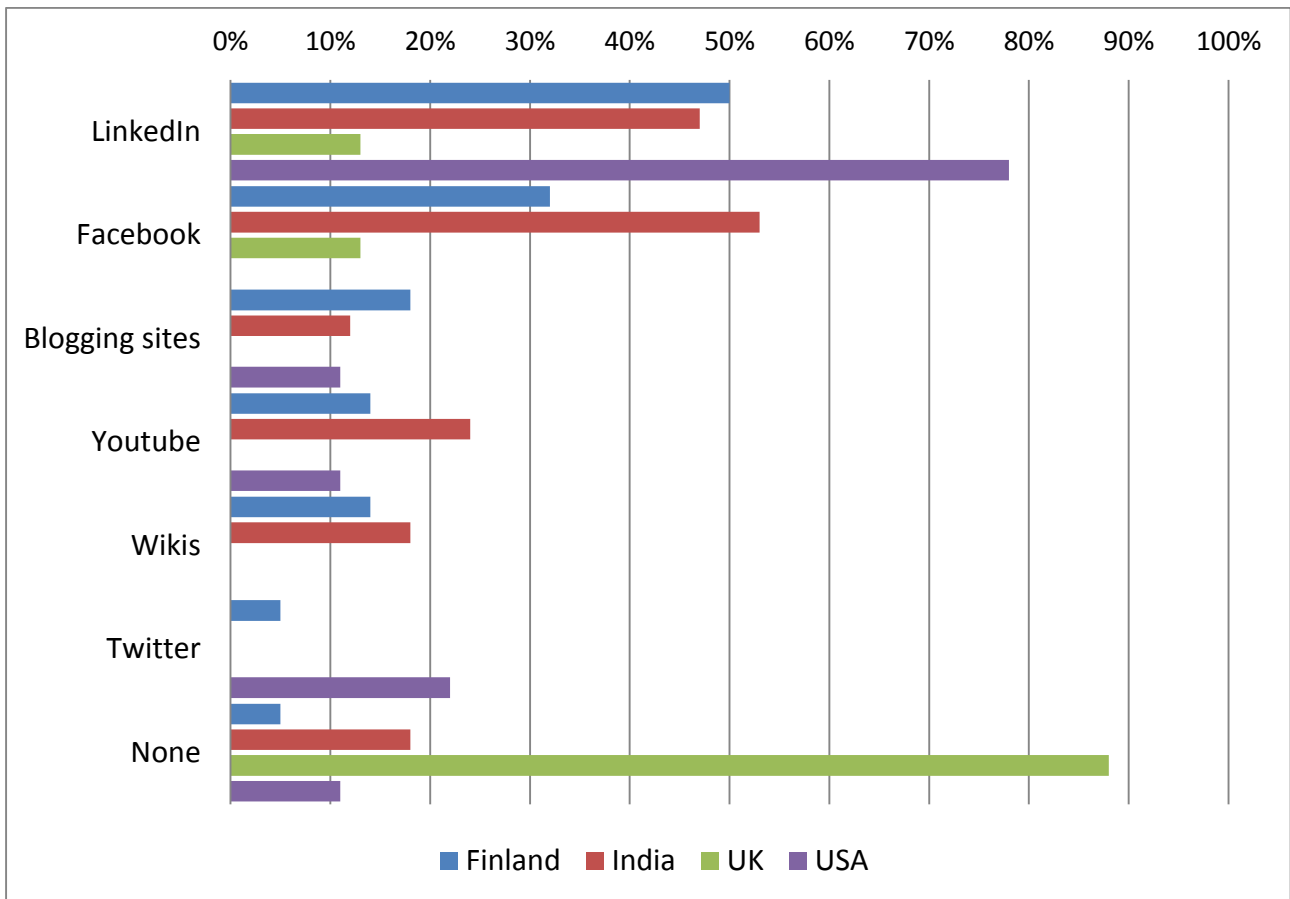


Figure 21: Customers' social media sites preference for business in Finland (n=22), India (n=16), UK (n=8) and USA (n=10).

The results were presented for each country separately in Figure 22, 23, 24 and 25. Customers' choice of social media were further analyzed in each target country.

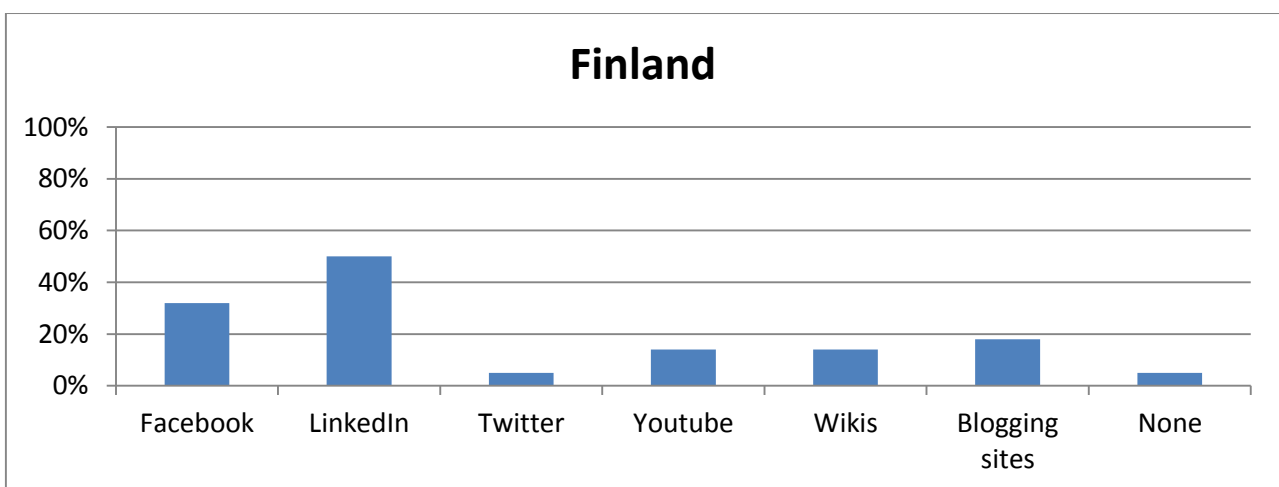


Figure 22: Customers' preference of social media sites for business in Finland (n=22).

In Finland, LinkedIn is the most popular business social media site with 11 (50%) customers active engaging for business, followed by Facebook chosen by 7 (32%) customers.

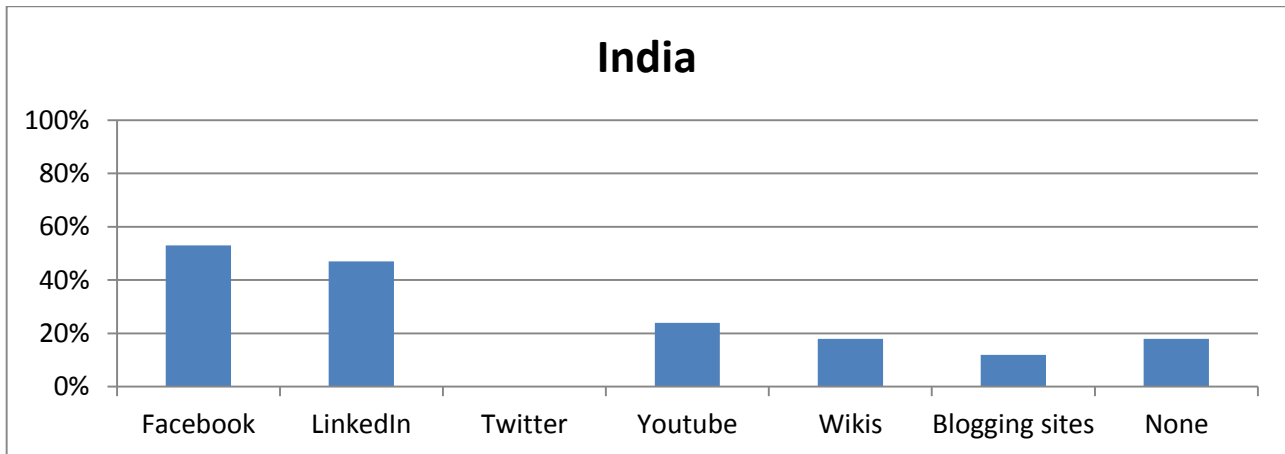


Figure 23: Customers' social media sites preference for business in India (n=16).

Although LinkedIn is chosen by 7 out of 16 Indian customers. The most popular business social media site in India is Facebook chosen by 16 Indian customers (53%). At the same time, Youtube is adopted for business use in India, 4 customers (25%) would use Youtube for business purpose.

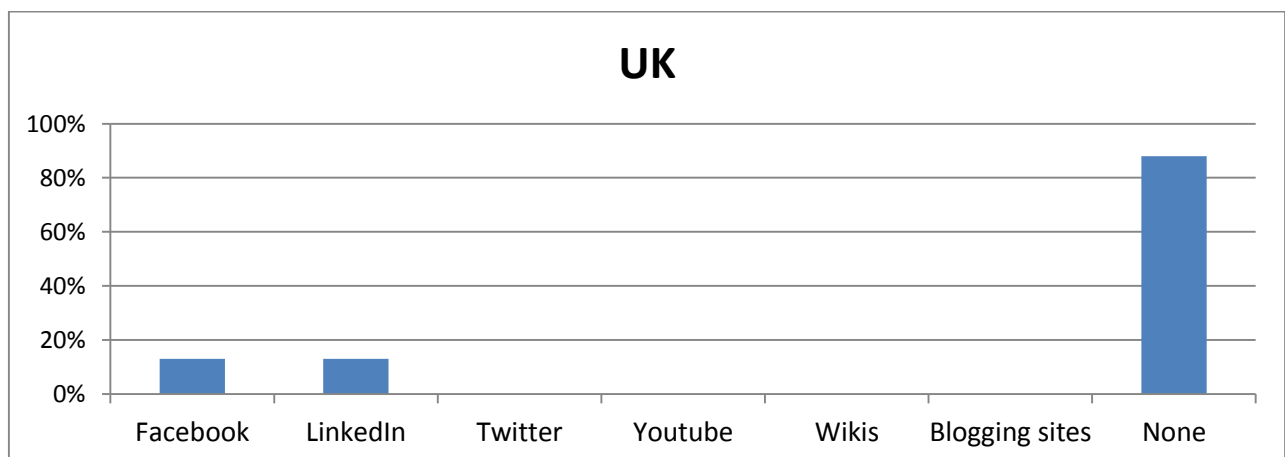


Figure 24: Customers' social media sites preference for business in UK (n=8).

UK has overall very low engagement rate for the social media sites in business. Only 1 out of 8 people chose Facebook and LinkedIn as business social media site.

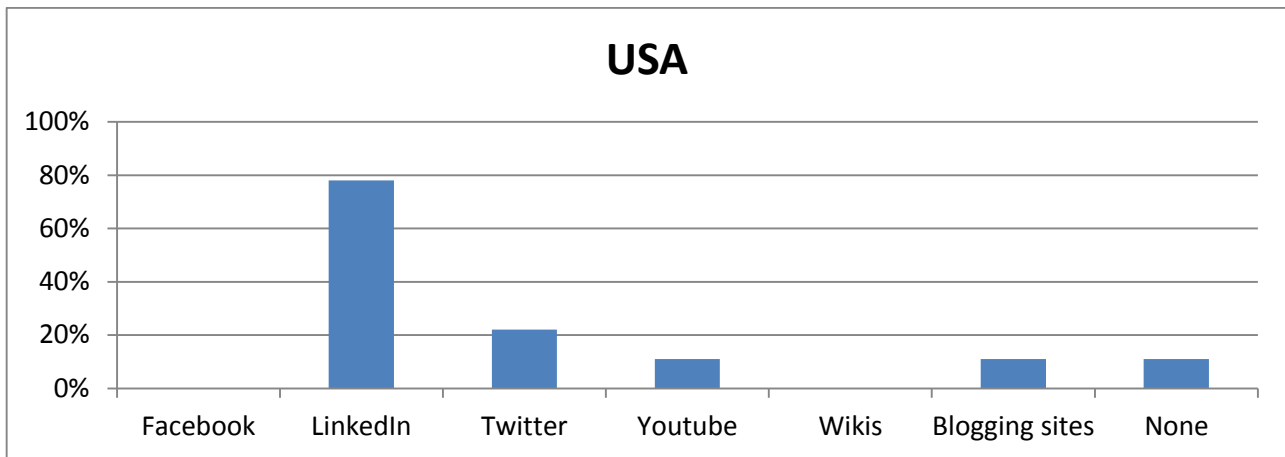


Figure 25: Customers social media sites preference for business in USA (n=10).

In USA, LinkedIn has the dominant percentage 78% (n=10) as the social media site where people engage with business-related matters, followed by Twitter with 22% (n=10). The other social media sites account for small percentage of the business engagement usage. One thing worth noting is that no one chose Facebook as the business social media site in USA.

The popularity of activities in social media differs in the target countries as shown in Figure 26. The following activities were investigated in the research.

- Connect with friends and family
- Read news
- Access entertainment (games etc.)
- Share opinion (posts, blogs etc.)
- Access reviews (product, movies, hotels etc.)
- Meet people
- Share media (pictures, videos etc.)
- Research for work (marketing intelligence etc.)
- Get deals
- Interact with brands (being proud and associated with brands)
- Network for work and career
- Search jobs

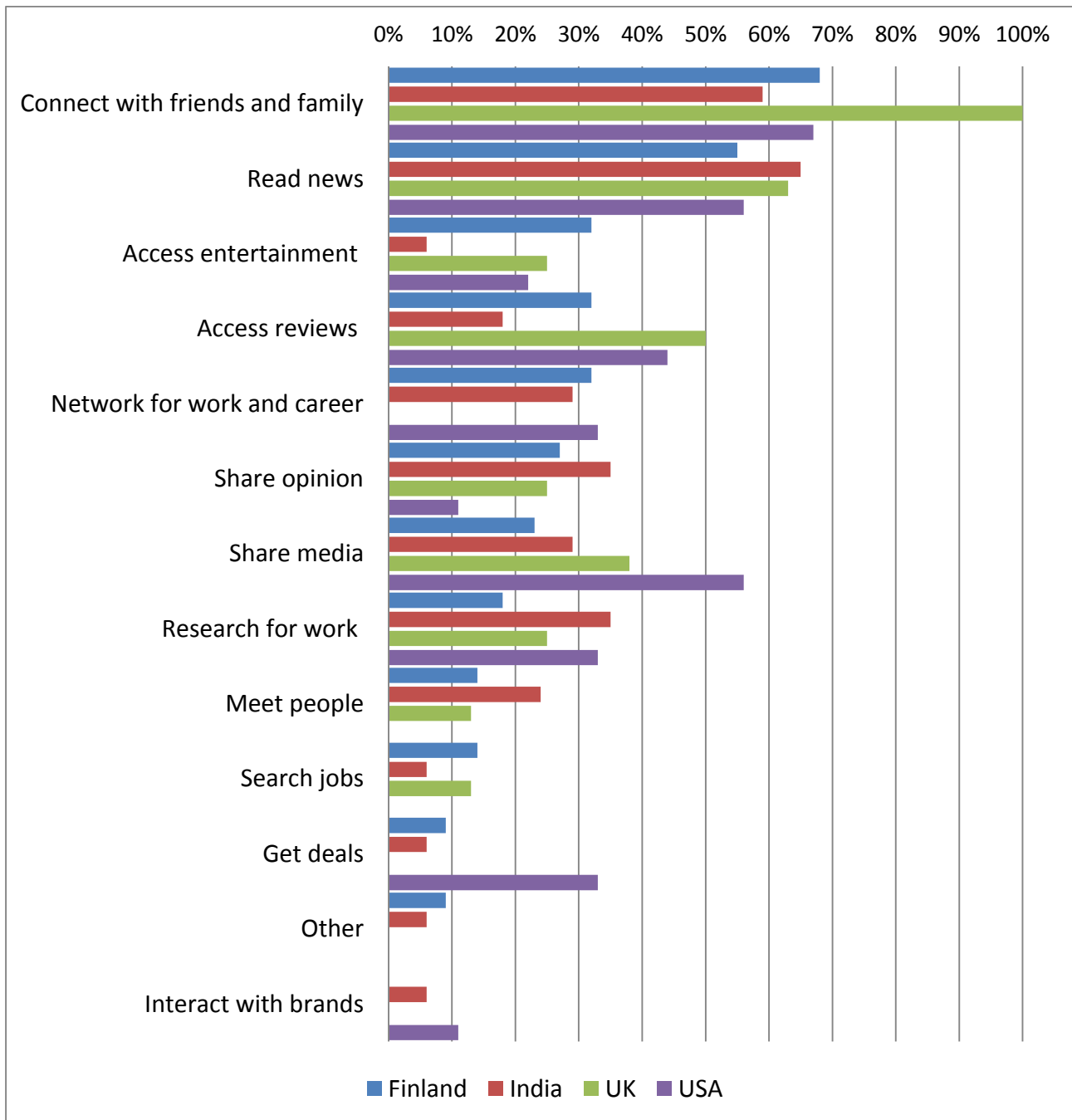


Figure 26: Use of social media activities in Finland (n=22), India (n=16), UK (n=8) and USA (n=10).

As shown in Figure 26, social media is primarily used to “Connect with friends and family” for respondents in all target countries. For business activities, “Read news” are ranked as the most popular activity across all targeting countries. On the other hand, “Interact with brands”, “Get deals” and “Search jobs” are the least popular activities.



Figure 27: Use of social media activities in Finland (n=22).

In Finland, the top two most popular activities in social media are “Connect with friends and family” and “Read news”. They were favored by 15 (68%) and 12 (55%) respondents respectively. The other top activities in social media are “Access entertainment”, “Access reviews” and “Network for work and career”. Those three activities were all chosen by 7 out of 22 respondents, which accounts for 32% of the total Finnish respondents.

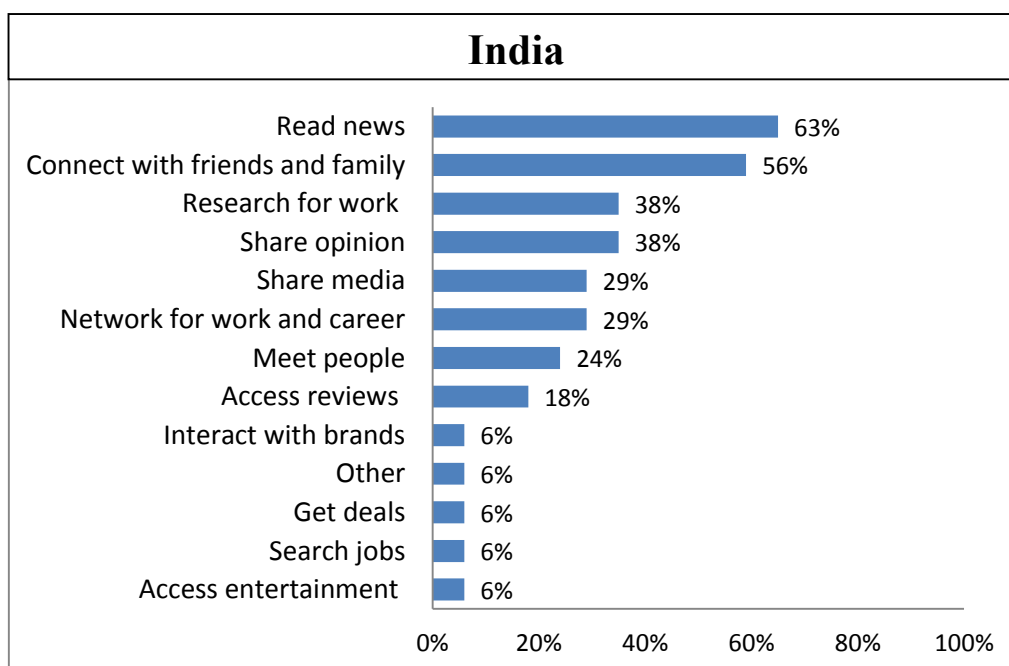


Figure 28: Use of social media activities in India (n=16).

10 out of 16 (65%) Indian respondents indicated that they “Read news” in social media, making it the most popular activity in social media. The second most popular social media activity “Connect with friends and family” was chosen by 9 of out 16 (56%) Indian respondents. “Research for work” and “Share media (pictures, videos etc.)” were favored by 6 out of 16 (38%) Indian customers. On the other hand, “Access entertainment (games etc.)”, “Get deals” and “Search jobs” were among the most unpopular activities, each activity were only chosen by 1 person.

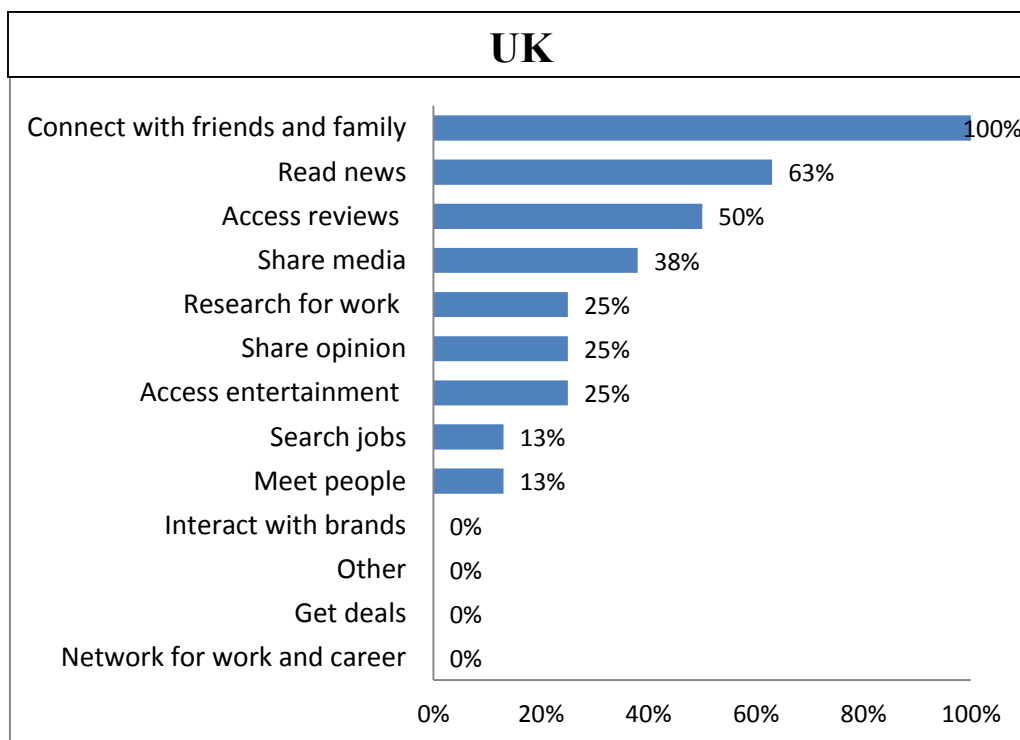


Figure 29: Use of social media activities in UK (n=8).

As shown in Figure 29, all 8 UK respondents use social media to “Connect with friends and family”. “Read news” (63%, n=8) is the top business-related activity in social media for UK customers, chosen by 5 out of 8 respondents. In addition, 4 (50%) UK customers chose “Access reviews” and 3 (38%) customer chose “Share media (pictures, videos etc.)”. UK customers not only passively view other’s posts, but also actively share multimedia material in social media. However, respondents from UK do not “Network for work and career” nor “Interact with brands (being proud and associated with brands)” at all.

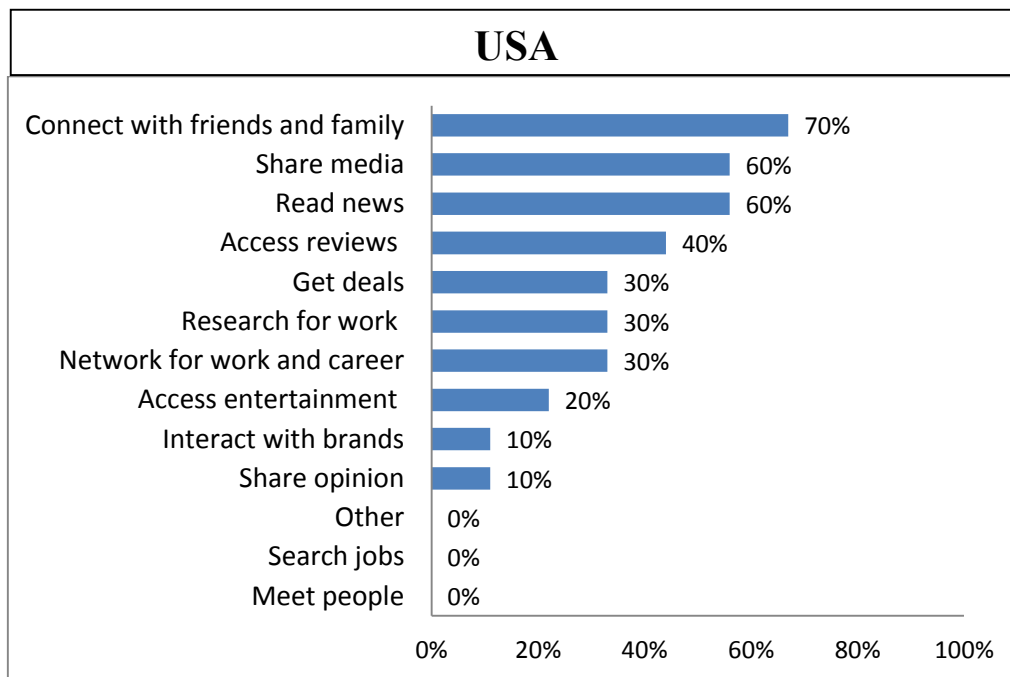


Figure 30: Use of social media activities in USA (n=10).

Customers from USA have “Connect with friends and family” as the most popular activity in social media, with 7 out of 10 (70%) respondents chose it. The following most popular activities in social media are “Share media” and “Read news”, both activities were chosen by 6 out of 10 respondents. In addition, 4 (40%) customers from USA use social media to “Access reviews”. However, none of the USA respondent use social media to “search jobs” or “meet people”.

5.2 Deepen and advance customer engagement in social media

Five interviews were conducted with Tekla employees in this research, including marketing manager from Tekla Building and Construction (Tekla B&C) Marketing based on Tekla headquarters (HQ), web content coordinator from Tekla B&C Marketing in Tekla HQ, Tekla product marketing manager in Tekla HQ, and marketing manager from Tekla South East Asia (SEA) as well as marketing and design coordinator from Tekla United Kingdom (UK). They answered the questions about the significance of social media, Tekla’s current use of social media to engage customers, the challenges that Tekla faces and their suggestions in order to engage customers in social media.

5.2.1 Be present in social media

All five interviewees from Tekla recognized the increasing importance of social media in B2B market. They expected that in about five years, social media might be the main channel for marketing communication. The presence of brands in social media is essential in the near future with the rising of generation Y. Generation Y are people who were born from early 1980s to the early 2000s. Based on Junco and Mastrodicasa (2007), people who were born between 1983 and 1992 used technology at higher rates than people from other previous generations. They grew up with computers in their homes. 97% of these students owned a computer, 94% owned a cell phone, and 56% owned an MP3 player (Junco and Mastrodicasa, 2007). Therefore, generation Y has extensive digital exposure and they are used to online, especially social media communication.

Tekla HQ product marketing manager commented that “In 5 years, 10 years max, generation Y becomes the mainstays of their firms and gradually gain the decision making sayings. Social media will mostly likely to be their main source of gaining information and engage with companies. They don't know how to operate without social media. It will eventually happen. Business will be more social media oriented at that time. Therefore, social media will be essential in the future. ”

However, the opinions vary on the significance of social media for Tekla currently and how much resources Tekla should invest. Tekla HQ content coordinator saw social media with great significance. She noted that “Tekla needs to be present where customers are. It is highly important for Tekla to be present in social media”. Tekla HQ marketing manager thought it is fairly important to be present in social media with the clear benefits of engaging with customers. However, “it is difficult to get the direct revenue and direct the traffic to the sales people, and push them to the buying stage...It is just one channel among many others to reach and engage customers” said the Tekla HQ marketing manager. He thought Tekla should use it critically and efficiently. Tekla HQ product marketing manager didn't think social media is important for Tekla at this stage, he said “Our main target are construction industry decision makers who are 50 plus males with limited technical skills and online experience. Tekla should not invest so much resource in social media today, but rather be there and to learn, to test.”

During the interviews, many opportunities that social media can bring Tekla were identified, the reasons of being present in social media were summarized in Figure 31.

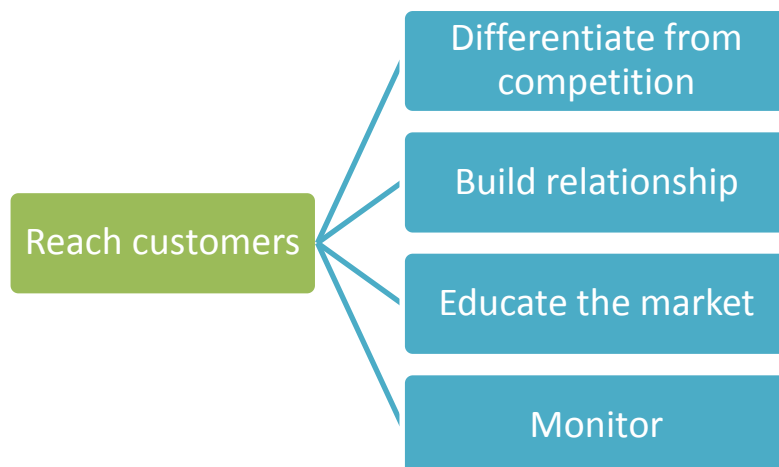


Figure 31: Purpose of being present in social media.

Social media can build new and effective way to reach customers. According to Tekla HQ content coordinator that Tekla HQ traditionally communicates with customers through areas and resellers. Social media provides a direct channel for Tekla HQ, Tekla areas and resellers to engage with customers. One unique characteristic of social media is that it facilitates online two-way dialogue among a large number of customers and companies. Before social media, it was no opportunity as such.

In addition, marketing and design coordinator in Tekla UK said that some traditional communication channels are losing their grounds. She said “companies rarely use mails and fax for customer communication. It is difficult to get people involved via emails. Often times hundreds of emails were sent, but only a third of the recipients open them. Customers do not visit Extranet (an internal social media platform Tekla created for providing service and communication with customers on maintenance). Now we can directly speak to them in social media.”

At the same time, Tekla HQ content coordinator pointed out that social media has low entrance barrier for marketers, it is easy to start and it does not require tremendous technical knowledge and resources. It is usually very cost efficient to utilize social media to reach target audience.

It helps to differentiate from competitors. Tekla HQ marketing manager told that Tekla has great customer service and local assistance. It has been a great competitive advantage that differentiates Tekla from competitors. Social media can contribute to

building that competitive advantage even further and communicate that with existing and potential customers. Tekla should use this opportunity to build a unique company profile and identity. It was suggested by Tekla HQ marketing manager that Tekla can state Tekla's value, attitude towards open BIM to differentiate from competitors.

Social media build relationship through informal interaction. It was explained by Tekla HQ marketing manager that a successful business cannot solely rely on premium product or service, it has a lot to do with building relationships with customers, prospects and other stakeholders. Social media can play a supporting role in that. He said that social media is a platform that most people spend their spare time on, it is more relaxed than other traditional business communication channels. There is a great opportunity to build the relationship on a personal level.

Tekla HQ marketing manager gave a successful example of developing customer relationship in social media. Shown in Figure 32, Tekla USA posted a funny picture in Facebook page Tekla Structures North America (<https://www.facebook.com/teklastructuresnorthamerica>, 2014). A Tekla employee shook hands with a performer dressed up as Elvis in a large Tekla event. In addition, Tekla USA hosted a caption contest of this picture in Facebook. It has received great response, a lot of creative captions were suggested.



Figure 32: Tekla employee meets Elvis in Tekla user day.

Tekla USA followed up the momentum in Facebook by uploading a video of the same Tekla employee who is Scottish. In this video, he expressed his “strong opinion” on American stereotype while walking in a typical Scottish piece of cloth “kilt”. Audience responded very well to this humorous and personal approach by commenting and liking the video in Facebook. This picture and video became a hot conversational topic offline as well. When customers or prospects meet Tekla people, they often started the conversation by telling they have watched the video or the picture. Based on this experience, Tekla HQ marketing manager thought relationship building through regular business procedure is

challenging. Informal and personal relationship tends to be most authentic. Although it takes a lot of time to build such customer relationship. Social media is a way to assist the journey.

Former Tekla SEA marketing manager commented that “It generally feels good to belong to a network. Tekla needs to have a presence and keep it active. So people know Tekla is not only a name, but we also practice what we approach.” Tekla SEA tends to build the relationship with customers by providing content that involves customers. For instance, they took pictures of the trainings and events, and posted them in Facebook. Then they told the users to check the pictures on Tekla SEA Facebook page. So the users went back and checked the images. It was a long lasting reminder of their experience during their training in Tekla. Marketing manager from Tekla SEA thought that “They feel involved. We are not distancing ourselves. Actually social media pull everyone together.”

It is about education. Social media can serve the purpose of educating the audience. According to the interviewees, some Tekla’s customers still see Tekla as a steel fabricating and steel detailing software provider. Tekla HQ content coordinator said that “Tekla try to convey the message that Tekla does more than steel detailing, there are so many more segments that Tekla covers.”

Furthermore, social media is expected to speed up the buying process. Tekla HQ product marketing manager said that customers search information about Tekla and evaluate Tekla in multiple channels. If they follow Tekla in social media, they are aware of Tekla’s news and development path. Although it might not get them directly into the sales funnel, it helps to take them one step closer to Tekla by updating them with Tekla’s progress.

It is a monitor tool. Marketing and design coordinator in Tekla UK thought that social media would be the ultimate monitor tool. According to her, social media can track who follows Tekla and what content they are interested in, and how many people shared or commented. In addition, Tekla can follow the discussions about Tekla, hear their feedback and suggestion to Tekla and be aware of industry trend and competitors’ information. Social media provides the opportunity to collect and analyze massive data.

Marketing and design coordinator in Tekla UK said that “Different users groups such as active users, silent followers and opinion leaders can be identified and nurtured. We can directly speak to them in social media. In the past, a lot of effort was put in pushing

advertisements in magazines. Unless you have the phone number dedicated to the ad, it is almost impossible to measure the results.”

5.2.2 Social media channels

Tekla has many social media accounts, which are owned by Tekla HQ and area offices. The major sites are Facebook, Twitter, Youtube and LinkedIn. Different social media sites play different roles in customer engagement. It allows Tekla to have more opportunity to approach customers, since each channel has a unique user base. Tekla HQ content coordinator said that “We don’t want to force our customers into one channel. We provide multiple accesses for customers.”

Facebook

According to the interviews, Tekla has multiple accounts in Facebook as follows:

- Tekla Corporation, owned by Tekla B&C marketing.
- Tekla Structures India, owned by Tekla India.
- Tekla Structures North America, owned by Tekla US.
- Tekla South East Asia, owned by Tekla SEA.
- Tekla Structures Middle East, owned by Tekla ME.
- Tekla Structures Deutschland (Tekla Germany), owned by Tekla Germany.
- Tekla Structures UK, owned by Tekla UK.
- Tekla France, owned by Tekla France.
- Tekla Suomi (Tekla Finland), owned by Tekla Finland.
- Tekla Sverige (Tekla Sweden), owned by Tekla Sweden.
- Tekla Campus, owned by Tekla B&C marketing.
- Tekla BIMsight, owned by Tekla BIMsight team.

Among different Tekla Facebook accounts, cross referencing and repost are common. But there is a lack of standard process and systematic way of collaborating in Facebook. Tekla HQ content coordinator commented “There is no process, no common way of using it. It is a wild forest.”

According to the marketing and design coordinator in Tekla UK, Tekla’s audience in Facebook is mostly existing customers. Facebook is used mainly as a messenger and a transit stop before its final destination. Usually links to tekla.com or other sites were posted

which lead to more detailed information. Former Tekla SEA marketing manager confirms the perception about Facebook “the link to Tekla.com/SEA is always included if we were to podcast anything. They know where else to find information.”

It remain unclear for the interviewees how much concrete business impact, such as leads and sales, Facebook could bring.

Twitter

Twitter enables people to broadcast and obtain short messages instantly. According to Tekla HQ product marketing manager, Tekla has considerable amount of followers in Twitter. Most of the followers are heavy users of Tekla’s products. Tekla can reach more customers by including “hash tag” in the short message to be associated and reach more audience.

Tekla has only one Twitter account, <https://twitter.com/Tekla>. Tekla HQ product marketing manager mentioned “Tekla is one of the few companies with this size has only one Twitter account. It is common to has multiple accounts in Twitter. Tekla has a lot of people who raise their hands to be the leader there.”

In comparison to other social media channels, Twitter has shown greater impact in the market. As Tekla HQ product marketing manager said that “Twitter is the channel we can see it is already making some impact in the market. Twitter is commonly used in USA. That’s our main market.” Tekla has integrated Twitter account to other online channels. Told by Tekla HQ product marketing manager, “Tekla integrated Twitter account in the website, there is Twitter feed. We have integrated the Tekla BIMsight Twitter account to Tekla’s main twitter account.”

However, there are challenges in managing Twitter account and establishing some process.

Youtube

The interviewees said that YouTube is a frequently used social media channel for Tekla. Youtube generates a lot of interests and the videos cab vividly demonstrates Tekla models and projects. Tekla often embeds YouTube videos in Tekla public website.

LinkedIn

According to the interviews, LinkedIn is positioned as a professional social media site, people consume the industry knowledge and follow industry trend there. LinkedIn is also used as a tool to track and learn more about Tekla's contacts. Tekla HQ product marketing manager said "within less than one minute, we can see what job he is doing, what he has done, and what his network is. We use social media to find more information about our users. We can start doing different campaigns."

However, it was agreed among the interviewees that Tekla does not use LinkedIn to its full potential. More resources should be invested to explore the best use of LinkedIn.

Other channels

Tekla HQ marketing manager said that for all social media sites, mobile devices and the Internet enable people to access social media everywhere and anytime. Tekla should consider optimizing social media content and usage for mobile devices. According to Tekla HQ content coordinator, Tekla owns a blog, Slideshare account as well as internal social media channels such as Extranet, Intranet and Yammer.

5.2.3 Know the audience in social media

According to interviews, Tekla has been present in social media since 2009. All interviewees thought it is essential to know the composition of Tekla's social media audience in order to step into their shoes, and offer the engagement they are looking for.

Marketing and design coordinator in Tekla UK pointed out that there is a mix of audience in Tekla social media accounts. She said that social media is accessible almost from all over the world. There is great diversity in Tekla's audience in social media. They are different nationalities who spoke different languages, and their professionals and positions in the company might differ from each other. Major groups of Tekla's social media audience were identified through the interviews.

Existing customers. According to the interviews, existing customers is the biggest group who engage with Tekla in social media. Three out of five interviewees hoped the interaction in social media cultivate Tekla brand ambassadors, who actively recommend Tekla to others.

Prospects. Marketing and design coordinator in Tekla UK explained a significant number of potential customers learnt about Tekla through social media and started follow or like Tekla social media accounts, like Facebook page and Twitter.

Tekla HQ product marketing manager told that Tekla tried to trigger actions whichever stage the prospects are. He said that “social media is a great place to start a conversation, hopefully lead to a meeting or demonstration. If they are evaluating the software, comprehensive content and easy access in social media will assist the prospects to download Tekla BIMsight and start using it.”

Different social media sites can complement each other. It is challenging to identify and target prospects. However, certain social media site, such as LinkedIn can be used for that purpose.

Pirate users. Pirate users are also among the people who follow and like Tekla in social media sites. Tekla UK marketing and design coordinator told that they caught a pirate user in Facebook. “They interacted with us on Facebook, he told me who he is working for. We have investigated the company. They are not a customer of us. We have our sales people knock on their door. They are using TS without our licenses. They end up being our customers directly from Facebook interaction.”

5.2.4 Build a corporate identity

During the interviews, Tekla was suggested to have a well-defined corporate identity in social media.

Tekla HQ marketing manager suggests to figure out Tekla’s identity in social media through answering a series of questions. The questions include “Does Tekla want to be seen as a serious organization in social media” and “Does Tekla want to have a more causal style that people can easily approach and relate to in social media?” He stated that different channels play different roles in customer communication and engagement. Website and other traditional channels can carry the role of being informative and instructive. Social media should stay fun and interactive.

During the interviews, it was a common understanding that Tekla should adjust the way of communication in social media and establish a “corporate identity” in social media. The “corporate identity” consists of Tekla personnel who are behind the account and communication style.

People are interested to know whom they do business with. Marketing manager from Tekla SEA suggested to introduce the personnel in the area offices in social media. “It creates a face of the company for Tekla. When we speak with customers, we do reach out

them on first names basis. They do feel a little closer knowing who is behind and answering their queries.”

In addition, knowing who post and comment in Tekla social media sites establish credibility of the content. Marketing manager from Tekla SEA suggested that “If we talk about a seminar, webinar in Facebook, it is good to know who the writer is. They (audience in social media) can say ‘I know the background of this person. He is very knowledgeable in this area’. That would help in terms of advice.”

All five interviewees agree that the communication style in social media should be adjusted to suit the audience in social media. Marketing and design coordinator in Tekla UK said that social media is less business-oriented comparing to other marketing communication channels. Therefore, the communication style should be more personal and has a relaxed tone-of-voice.

Marketing and design coordinator in Tekla UK suggested the engagement in social media should be personal, she said “Social media is one of the first steps towards us (Tekla). It is the word-of-mouth. It is the friends telling you. You go into the sales funnel. It is important to get a positive and professional image of us. They won’t interact with us if we are too official (in social media).” She gave a tip in addressing business contacts in Facebook, “You can approach the person by his rank in his company. If I know you better as an off-site person, then I would approach him as an off-site person. It doesn’t have to be hierarchical, small changes could be applied.”

Marketing and design coordinator in Tekla UK said that the social media provides an opportunity to get rid of the usual corporate language Tekla uses to approach customers. Traditional ways of communicating are full of technical terms and industry standards, which might be very attractive and interesting in social media. It makes the communication distant and the engagement stays on an official and professional level. If the goal is to engage customers on a deeper level, the choice of tone-of-voice is essential. “We have a quite relaxed tone in our Facebook. It would be more relaxed and funnier and lighter content.” Tekla HQ content coordinator said.

5.2.5 Create a content guideline

According to the interviews, content marketing is essential for social media. Tekla should have a clear vision and strategy in terms of the content creation in social media. It was agreed among the interviewees that a general guideline should be given to content

contributors on how to create highly engaging content in social media. During the interviews, some basic elements were given to define good content in social media as shown in Figure 33.

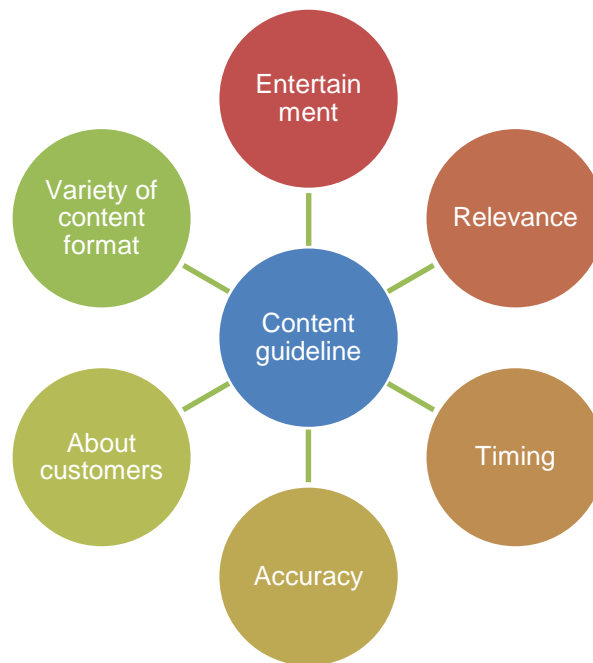


Figure 33: Content creation guideline in social media.

Entertainment. Social media should differentiate from other digital channels, such as company's website and blogs. Marketing and design coordinator in Tekla UK said that social media is not positioned as a serious business communication channel, but a more personal platform with a relaxed tone of voice. It is a platform where most people spend their spare time on. People should be given a reason to follow and like social media in addition to the existing channels and material. The content should be entertaining, light, engaging and relevant content. She continued to add that people are likely to share posts or comments "since it is amusing". She said Tekla "can get customers involved through content with entertainment value."

However, Tekla is not there yet. Marketing and design coordinator in Tekla UK commented on the current content in Tekla's social media accounts, "we seem to be behind with the things come out. We should have more of the funky ideas. Be vivid and the fashionable thing." Former Tekla SEA marketing manager suggested Tekla to think out of the box to come up with entertaining content. She said "we are very practical or boring most of the

time. We can be more creative and try different things. Create some campaigns to activate people do something nice and funny.”

Tekla HQ marketing manager gave a successful example of engaging people through entertaining content. Shown in Figure 32, Tekla USA posted a funny picture in Facebook of a Tekla employee meeting a performer dressed up as Elvis in a large Tekla event. In addition, Tekla USA hosted a caption contest of this picture in Facebook. It has received great response, a lot of creative captions were suggested.

Relevance. According to the interviews, content has to be relevant to audience in order to awaken their interests and engage them in social media. Companies must keep in mind who the audience are. Tekla has audience in different industries and segments, thus they have different interests in the content. Tekla should segment the audience and identify their interests, then tailor the message to meet their interest.

Tekla HQ content coordinator pointed out that software users might be interested in the software features. Therefore, posts contains technical details would address their interests. Decision makers focus on the high level benefits, the posts includes concrete business benefits can help to engage them. In addition, there are prospects, evaluators, students and etc. The content always needs to address certain group’s needs and be relevant to them.

Although the content in social media might not lead to a direct sale, it can help to speed up the sales process. Tekla HQ product marketing manager told in the interview “social media can make the sales process faster, we are in B2B, the buying process is quite long. The buying is very rational.”

Timing. Former Tekla SEA marketing manager stated that good content needs to be posted in a timely manner. She said her way of doing it is that “I try to keep it as close as possible to the timing.” It is important to update the recent events or projects. It helps to raise the interests from the audience.

Accuracy. Former Tekla SEA marketing manager told in the interview “The main thing is that the information in social media sites is accurate.” The content in social media will be publicly available until it is taken off and they can be viewed by everyone who follows Tekla in social media. In many years, people might still refer to the content Tekla publishes today. It might influence business decisions due to its broad reach. Accurate information

will increase the credibility of Tekla, on the other hand, false and vague information might have negative impact on the brand image. Former Tekla SEA marketing manager also said that “We are careful not to mention anything too technical. When it does, we have to make sure everyone knows what is going on. We are prepared to answer questions.”

It is not all about Tekla. It is about customers too. Tekla should encourage customers to share their experience and be open with Tekla in social media. Tekla HQ content coordinator said Tekla should “not always ask and expect them (audience) to like and share our posts. We should have them want to tell us what they are doing. We want to provide a place that is interesting for them to talk. It provides a base for us to know what customers think about Tekla.” It was suggested by the marketing and design coordinator in Tekla UK that Tekla can learn about our audience through interaction in social media, for instance Tekla can “ask them to fill in something and learn more about them.”

Most of the people who engage with Tekla in social media are existing customers. It’s good to make our existing followers to retweet, post, and interact with Tekla. User-generated content is found to be more credible and effective to influence prospects’ opinion. In addition, Tekla can reach more audience through customers’ network.

Variety of content format. According to interviews, the content should come in multiple forms in addition to written text. “A picture is worth a thousand words.” Complex ideas can be conveyed with just a single image. Videos can be very powerful to engage audience and make an impact. Marketing and design coordinator in Tekla UK said “good to share visually appealing images, catch their (audience’s) attention and it helps them to start to follow Tekla. From the catchy things, interesting and solid content need to be followed in order to maintain their interests.”

5.2.6 Generate the right content

Practical social media content was suggested for Tekla during the interviews as shown in Figure 34. It serves as a starting point where Tekla areas and resellers can create their social media content.



Figure 34: Social media content suggestion for Tekla.

Case studies. Case studies are recommended to be a source of content in social media. Cases studies, especially complex projects usually received a lot of attention in social media. Customers and prospects would like to learn how others have overcome challenges in projects, what have been the new application and development in the industry. For Tekla, case studies are solid proof of the capability and benefits of Tekla software and Tekla’s service. Former Tekla SEA marketing manager said that “Case studies are actually customer endorsement of how Tekla has helped them in their productivity.” Case studies are popular because “it shares the perspective of customers.”

Case studies were suggested to publish systematically among different marketing communication channels, including social media. Firstly, new case studies are uploaded in tekla.com. And then the information of this project and the link to the case study can be posted in Facebook. At the same time, email announcement can be sent through CRM to targeted audience.

Project images. Based on the interviews, people are interested in visually impressive pictures and the story behind it. The image helps to catch their attention and start reading the story behind the image. Gradually they start following Tekla in social media. Tekla HQ

content coordinator reminded that “from the catchy things, interesting and solid content need to be followed to maintain their interests.”

Business and service development. Social media is a great place to deliver the message about Tekla’s software development. Tekla HQ product marketing manager said that Tekla should post “Not only campaign slogans, but really something they want to hear, e.g. some new improvement, new solution, new features.”

Share content from other Tekla accounts, partner and Trimble companies. Content should be shared among different Tekla social media accounts. It is a great way to generate more content. At the same time, it demonstrates the global impact and the broad international network that Tekla has. The marketing manager in Tekla SEA said that “stories shared from HQ and UK received a lot of likes.” In addition, Tekla should share Tekla’s partners’ and Trimble companies’ social media posts. It reminds people that Tekla has a large and international network. It is beneficial to create trust.

Customer recognition. Tekla’s customers should be introduced and recognized in social media. Unlike the case studies, the focus should be on customers and their stories instead of the projects. Tekla should introduce the background of the customer as a company or as an individual, be proud of their achievement. At the same time, they can introduce how Tekla has helped them along the way. Former Tekla SEA marketing manager said that “Everyone wants a bit of publicity to some extent. They are shy until they see how good it is. It provides the credibility when telling the story. When you interview them and ask questions, the feeling of being important comes in. They often feel very proud of what they have done.”

Tekla needs to find the influential and relevant companies, and contacts in local areas. It usually resonates more with the audience if they know about whom the story is about. And their endorsement of Tekla is more credible.

Campaigns. From the interviews, it was suggested to keep the social media synchronized with Tekla marketing campaigns. Social media is an easy way to broadcast Tekla activities and messages. It serves as a great link to the real campaign site. Marketing and design coordinator in Tekla UK said that “I use social media to post about competitions, version release. It helps to reinforce the message from Tekla.”

Events. It is necessary to keep customers updated with Tekla's recent events or the events Tekla would be present in. Not only it is a great promotion tool for Tekla events, but also it shows that Tekla is active and being close to customers. Former Tekla SEA marketing manager told her experience, "when we have upcoming big event, e.g. user day, we usually mention it with a theme, like 'This would be where we have our user day in those countries'. It has worked out pretty well." She also told that she uses social media as an event preview tool to inform customers the events which come up in the next quarter in SEA. Customers can choose to follow what they are interested in. In addition to the event date and place, former Tekla SEA marketing manager mentioned that the content and agenda of the event as well as the speakers need to be properly introduced. Thus, customers can set the right expectation and talk to the right person in the event.

Customer generated content. Results indicate people like to talk about what they do in business. Tekla should provide the platform for them to talk about their projects and Tekla. Meanwhile, customers interact with Tekla, other customers and prospects, which allows to engage more audience in Tekla's social media platform. Tekla should create the environment that the audience is encouraged and rewarded to post and share. Former Tekla SEA marketing manager said that "We should have them want to tell us what they are doing. We want to provide a place that is interesting for them to talk." In addition, customer generated content is a great opportunity for Tekla to know more about customers.

5.2.7 Establish a content creation process

Four out of five interviewees pointed out that Tekla has challenges in creating content in social media. Firstly, there is a lack of content contributors in social media. According to Tekla HQ content coordinator, Tekla HQ marketing team is responsible for the content creation for all corporate level social media accounts. There is little involvement of Tekla employees outside of marketing team. Secondly, there is no process of collecting and evaluating the content in social media. It is necessary to establish a proper content creation process. During the interviews, a few principles were proposed to guide the content creation process in social media.

Tekla should have a social media content team consists of Tekla employees from different functional units. Tekla HQ content coordinator mentioned that she often feels "I don't have the time, and the knowhow to create something worthwhile to post." Marketing and design

coordinator in Tekla UK said that sales people should be involved in the content generation process due to their extensive knowledge of customers. They know what type of content customers are interested, and furthermore, they can turn their first-hand information about the customers and projects into content online. She said that “sales people are out on the road 80% of the time. They could contribute more to the content with information of customers.” Marketing and design coordinator in Tekla UK said that technical people should definitely be involved as well. Marketing people are not necessarily equipped with the technical expertise to discuss technical issues. Tekla HQ marketing manager agreed to involve technical people in the content team, “we could have more in-depth insight about technology and software in social media, then it requires technical people and experts in BIM and our software.”

In order to have the commitment from the content contributors from other units, Tekla HQ marketing manager suggest to officially assign the tasks to create the content and pass on the information to marketing team in their job description. Then they generate content regularly or provide information to marketing people. Tekla HQ content coordinator said that all the content should be sent to marketing people to validate, and decide what content to be published, when to publish them and where to publish them.

UK marketing specialist gave one good example of how the collaboration was done in UK. Colleagues from other teams would come to her and tell what projects are on-going on customers' site, and ask if that would be something interesting to post in social media. If they decide that would be great to use as social media content, then they would gather material and write a post about it. When there are technical questions posted in social media from customers, they are forwarded to technical team who has the expertise to reply. In the content team, people with different background and expertise can work together in a systematic way to produce engaging and credible content for audience in social media.

5.2.8 Have synergy among difference operations and projects

As described in section 5.2.3 Social media channels, Tekla has many accounts in different social media channels managed by different administration entities. There are also resellers and Trimble group in Tekla's social media network. According to the interviews, there is little cooperation and synergy among social media accounts and administration teams. Tekla HQ marketing manager said “So far it is quite isolated.”

It was recognized by all interviewees that it is necessary to have synergy among different accounts and entities. In another word, Tekla needs to establish a process how to work together with all the accounts and administrators. Different entities that need to work in synergy are illustrated in Figure 35.

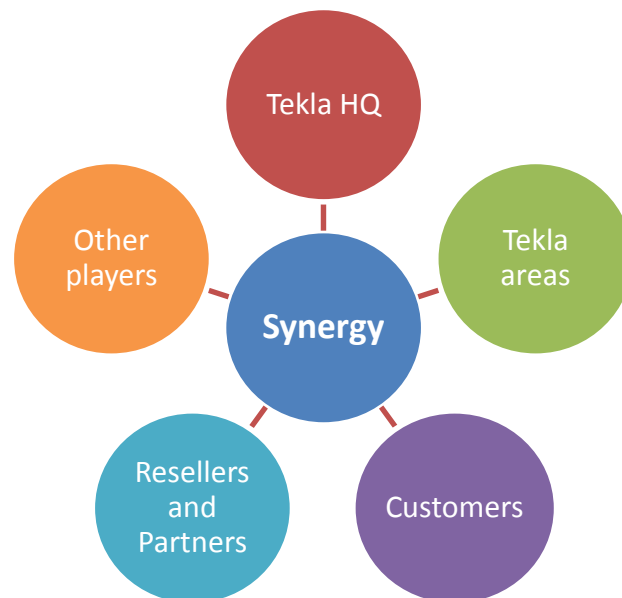


Figure 35: entities which need to work in synergy in social media.

Synergy among Tekla HQ and areas. Tekla HQ content coordinator told that there were some general guidelines and instruction on how to communicate with the audience in social media, including “what to post, how to keep it active”. However, there is no plan nor instruction on how to work together among Tekla HQ and Tekla area offices. Some area is more active than others. She said “We don’t have a common plan how we should all do. Everyone manages their account on their own. There is no cooperation.”

Tekla HQ content coordinator said that there is often good content from different accounts which is worth sharing. In addition, Facebook can generate new leads, but since the multiple presence of Tekla in Facebook, people might not find the most suitable Facebook page to follow. Marketing and design coordinator in Tekla UK said “At the moment, I don’t tell Tekla Middle East that you should check on this guy, he might be a great lead. If we do follow through some of the leads in social media that would help sales.”

Four out of five interviewees suggested to have a more systematic approach of posting, commenting, sharing and liking on Tekla social media accounts. However, Tekla HQ product marketing manager said that “not sure if we need a common plan. We have the

powerful local tool. They can localize the message, and tailor it to attract local audience. They do what is the best for local markets. In general, it is the existing customers we want to reach.”

Some ideas were suggested in the interviews for both Tekla HQ and area offices to build the way of working in social media sites. A summary is demonstrated in Figure 36, and the explanations follow.

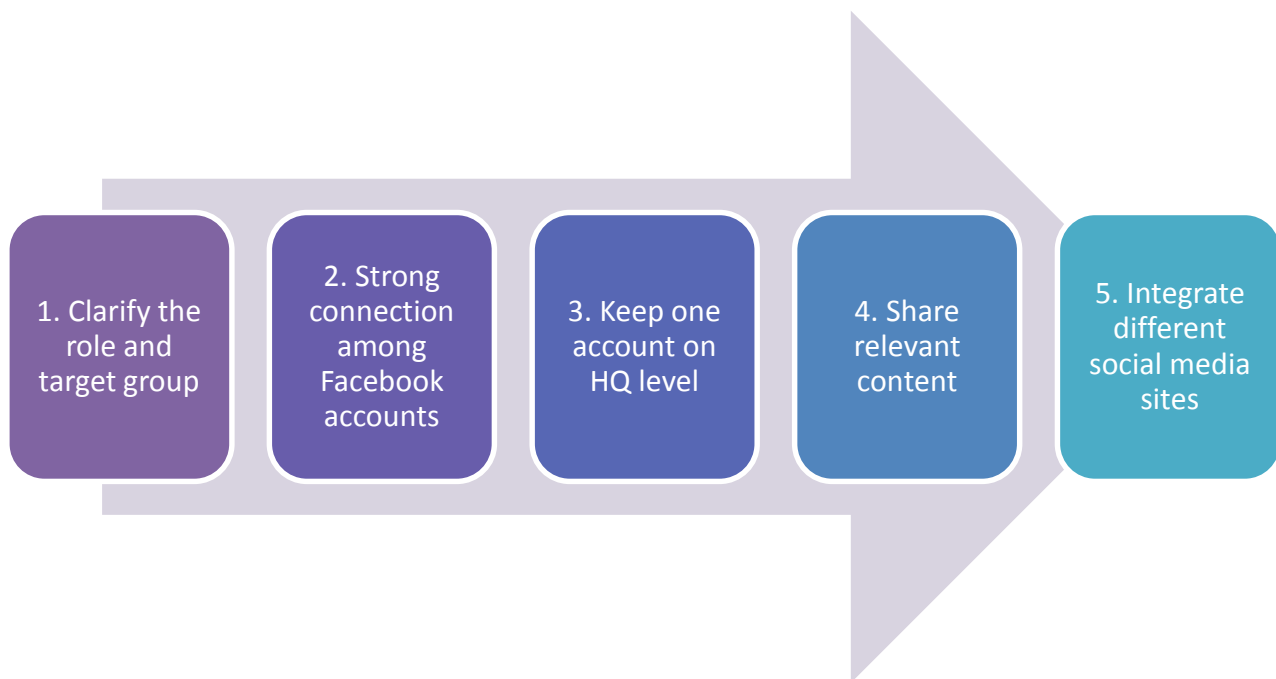


Figure 36: How to create synergy among HQ and areas.

It was suggested by the Tekla HQ content coordinator that “the role of each account should be clarified.” She suggested that “Tekla Corporation” Facebook account and Tekla areas Facebook accounts should define its target audience, objectives and type of content. She said that “there is no right answer how to divide it, just a choice of ways of working. It should be made clearer.” Suggested by Tekla HQ content coordinator, the target audience of “Tekla Corporation” Facebook account should be for English-speaking audience in all segments. Tekla local accounts are responsible for reaching local audience, mainly existing customers. Tekla Corporation and areas social media accounts should all contribute to build a consistent and integrated Tekla brand image.

Furthermore, Tekla HQ marketing manager and content coordinator suggested that there should be intensive connection among Tekla Corporation account and Tekla areas accounts. Tekla Corporation accounts’ administrators should frequently check on local

social media sites, and repost globally relevant message or share the local news. Tekla Corporation Facebook account should build a group brand image. HQ should have the links to Tekla local Facebook accounts, and vice versa. The connection should be strong and obvious. Tekla HQ content coordinator suggested that Tekla Corporation's Facebook page should have a map containing all the local areas with links to their Facebook pages.

It was mentioned in the interviews that Tekla HQ manages two Facebook accounts:

Tekla Corporation (<https://www.facebook.com/tekla.corporation>) is the corporate account for all areas, all products and all segments. It is managed by Tekla B&C marketing team.

Tekla BIMsight (<https://www.facebook.com/teklabimsight>) is a product level account targeted for Tekla BIMsight users, and it is managed by the Tekla BIMsight project team.

There is limited cooperation and connection between the two accounts. It was suggested by Tekla HQ content coordinator and marketing and design coordinator in Tekla UK that it would be good to keep just one account on the global level in Facebook. Tekla HQ content coordinator said that "I think consolidated effort is better than going on its own. It would be good to combine together, bring them all together under Tekla umbrella."

Tekla UK Marketing and design coordinator in Tekla UK said that the followers of "Tekla Structures UK" are from different countries. They are potentially leads for other areas. However, they are not being contacted or their interested have not been followed up since they are not Tekla UK's target. Therefore, she suggested to follow and share leads in social media especially if they are the target audience for other Tekla area offices. She said that "We need to develop a system for social media outside social media. At the moment, I don't tell Middle East that you should check on this guy, he might be a great lead. If we do follow through some of the leads in social media that would help sales."

It was suggested that the content should be shared, referenced among different Tekla social media sites, including Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and Youtube. It reaches the greatest number of viewers when the message appears in different channels, at the same time, it is a reminder for people who are present in multiple social media sites. Tekla HQ content coordinator said "Messaging coming from Twitter should be reflected in Facebook pages as well. For those who have both accounts, it is useful it serves as a reminder."

Synergy with customers. Tekla HQ marketing manager stated that it is not enough to work with local areas in social media. Tekla needs to build or being involved in an ecosystem. He said that Tekla needs to “create a bigger base.” One part of the ecosystem is customers. Not only Tekla can gain the network effect by including customer in the ecosystem, but also social media serves as a great way to communicate with customers. The network effect refers to the effect that one user has on the value of that product to other people. In social media, the value of a site is dependent on the number of others using it (Shapiro and Varian, 1999). The more people Tekla includes in its network, the more value it creates for everyone involved in the network. At the same time, Tekla turns to social media for help to communicate with customers.

According to the interviews, it should be fairly easy to include customers in Tekla social media network. The reason is that customers would like to be associated with Tekla brand. Tekla product marketing manager said that “what is important to our users and customers is that Tekla is relatively known in BIM globally. It is a quite a small bubble. People are interested to work with Tekla to have a more significant role in the whole BIM world.” In return, customers would like to get recognition from Tekla as a leading Tekla user, which helps them to build their reputation and brand in the BIM world. Tekla product marketing manager continued to add that “What they get from there? They get Tekla recognition. Tekla can recognize you as the leading Tekla user in the world, one of Tekla ambassadors. That is something that motivates them. They see they get recognition in Tekla environment and in a larger scale -- BIM industry. BIM world is still relatively small, there are a lot of opportunities for company to establish themselves as the leading/high level BIM service provider.”

Synergy with resellers and partners. Three interviewees suggested to include resellers and partners in the social media network. Tekla should follow and be active on their social media channels, for instance posting on their pages. Tekla can also invite them to like and follow Tekla in social media channels and post about them.

It was told by Tekla HQ product marketing manager that “we are in the same industry. Being active in our partners’ social media channels can increase our brand awareness in their circles.” Tekla can tag partners in Facebook, so Tekla’s posts will appear in their own pages. It is a good way to reach wider range of audience. Retweeting partners’ tweets are also an effective way to be visible for more audience. Tekla product marketing manager

gave one successful example, “when Trimble bought Sketch Up, we tagged Sketch Up in our tweet. Sketch Up has many followers, when we tweet and hashtag them, many people see Tekla.”

Tekla HQ marketing manager said that Tekla should have the “paying it forward” mentality. It is a concept describes the beneficiary of a good deed repaying someday later. He suggested that Tekla should be proactive and spread the words about our partners in social media. Somebody will notice the effort from Tekla. The partners might pay back one day with greater benefits.

Synergy with other players industry. Tekla HQ marketing manager said that it is essential to be connected with other parties that are in the ecosystem. By promoting, writing about each other and sharing content in the ecosystem, companies can be better connected and reach more audience through their each other’s network circles. Tekla HQ marketing manager suggested that Tekla should be connected to different industry circles that are relevant to Tekla in social media. He said that “In social circles, you tend to be around people who are like you. If you post something, they might be connected with someone who is related to our business. Their associates will see it. Our brands can keep coming up in different circles.” It does not only enlarge the audience base of Tekla brand, but also increases the credibility of the message since the audience learned about Tekla through their trusted contacts.

5.2.9 New customer engagement ideas

New ideas were discussed during the interviews to help form Tekla social media strategy and daily operation in social media.

Analyze customer profile and content preference. According to interviews, Tekla faces a wide range of audience in social media, from the world of potential who barely have heard of Tekla to Tekla super users. Social media is not only a place for companies to voice out, but also a great channel to learn about your customers and their preference. It was suggested in the interviews to investigate who follows Tekla and segment Tekla’s audience in different social media channels. Tekla HQ product marketing manager said that “we have the possibility to identify what business they are in, and what type of software they use, what type of work they do.”

Tekla should investigate customers' preference in social media based on previous data and results. Tekla HQ marketing manager suggested to analyze Tekla's social media content, including published posts, images and incentives. It aims to find out what type of content customers are more likely to engage with. He said that "Really analyze what is working and what is not working. Analyze the followers, who are they and what they interested in." Thus, Tekla can tailor the content to engage specific target group. He continued to add that "we have different type of messages for users for different phases. We can segment the audience."

Give customer recognition. It is really important to give the audience the reason and motivation to engage with companies in social media. Tekla HQ product marketing manager mentioned that one of the best incentives is customer recognition. Companies are eager to gain more brand awareness and industry recognition. In addition, companies are curious to know what and how their competitors are doing. Tekla HQ product marketing manager said that "what is important to our users and customers is that Tekla is relatively known in BIM globally, quite a small bubble. People are interested to work with Tekla to have a more significant role in the whole BIM world. Tekla can recognize you as the leading Tekla user in the world, one of Tekla ambassadors. That is something motivates them. They see they get recognition in Tekla environment and in a larger scale BIM industry."

In practice, Tekla HQ product marketing manager suggested to create different ranks. Tekla should be able to recognize Tekla customers in social media. Next, Tekla recognize the companies who have used Tekla extensively as Tekla ambassadors and promote them in social media to Tekla's network. He brainstormed three different levels of customer engagement recognition: "recommender, ambassador and king of the world".

Conduct creative and viral marketing campaign. It was agreed by all interviewees that social media is an interactive and less serious channel than other traditional marketing communication channels. Marketing and design coordinator in Tekla UK suggested that Tekla should have creative and viral marketing campaign in social media. She had a campaign idea with Lytro camera. She explained about the Lytro camera that it is a web based camera consisting of a series of ten lenses. When a photo is taken, it can focus on ten different focal lenses. The digital photo can be brought into different focuses. Lytro

allows people to refocus after taking the picture. As shown below, Picture 1 has the focus on the bottom right corner, after adjusting, the focus is on the upper left corner in Picture 2.



Picture 1: Lytro camera picture with focus on the bottom right corner (Aleks, 2013).



Picture 2: Lytro camera picture with focus on the upper left corner (Aleks, 2013).

She gave a creative campaign idea based on Lytro camera. She said that Tekla can post photos taken with Lytro camera and ask our audience to find specific mark in the image while refocusing the images. She gave one example, “You actually look for something in the photo, like finding Tekla BIMsight tattoo in someone’s arm. Can you find it? You can see things you don’t see before which amuses them.” It engages the audience with fun activity. She said that “The game can be really silly things and it is likely to go viral. You can offer a prize if they can actually spot.”

Marketing and design coordinator in Tekla UK recommended to try new and creative marketing idea that might go viral. She said social media is a great place for that type of activity. It is fun and amusing, people tend to share with friends. The campaign might go viral due to Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM), Hennig–Thurau et al. (2004) defined

eWOM as “Any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet” Social media has great value for eWOM due to its characteristic of fast spreading and wide audience reach. In addition to spread professional information and industry trend, brand’s message can be spread in casual context too. In social media, people closely follow the status of their friends and peers. Great content and creative campaign idea have a great possibility to go viral. It was told by the Tekla UK marketing specialist, “We want them tell their colleagues and friends about us.”

Marketing and design coordinator in Tekla UK gave an example of Coca-Cola recycling campaign in Israel. To promote recycling in Israel, Coca-Cola placed 10,000 recycle bins all over Israel. Each recycle bin was marked with their own Facebook Places location. The company encouraged users to check-in to the bins as they recycled, at the same time upload photos of themselves interacting with the recycle bins. Eventually people who were the most active to recycle bins were crowned as Recycling King. Though it might be somewhat awkward to check in to a recycling bin, the campaign trades on users wanting to tell their friends that they are helping the environment. Coca-Cola was able to brand themselves as an environmentally conscious company using user-generated content. Their message was carried out through eWOM in social media.

Marketing and design coordinator in Tekla UK suggested that Tekla could do similar campaign as well. She said Tekla can ask customers “Where do you use Tekla Structure or Tekla BIMsight? When there is an ongoing project in UK, you mark it on FB places, promote it and get people to interact. That way something fun and have a prize. And it all goes back to Tekla.”

Crowd sourcing. Brabham (2008) was the first to defined “crowdsourcing” in the scientific literature, he described crowdsourcing as

“... an online, distributed problem-solving and production model.”

Simply put, crowdsourcing is a way of obtaining needed services, ideas, or content by soliciting contributions from a large group of people, and especially from an online community, rather than from traditional employees or suppliers. It has the advantage of bringing in mass intelligence to solve issues with low costs (Merriam-Webster, 2013). The

vast audience base and interactive nature of social media made it a great place for crowdsourcing.

Tekla HQ marketing manager told in the interviews that Tekla USA had some successful crowdsourcing experience in social media. “We placed two advertisements in Facebook for one week, and people vote for which one they like more. We took two the next week. We took the winner of the two weeks, and ran those against each other, then asked what you would change in this. We create an ad based on the crowd sourcing. We got some really good response. ... It would be nice to do it again.”

Tekla HQ marketing manager said that he learnt that people did have an opinion about how Tekla advertised. Audience in social media can be seen as a source for valuable advice and input. He said “You get so deep into it yourself, because you are the one who created the ads. ... They see it with fresh eyes and they comment. It was very useful. It was little cost and little time.”

Entertainment. Most of the interviewees agreed that social media is not positioned as a serious business communication channel, but a more personal platform with a relaxed tone of voice. One of the most important reasons that people engage in social media is its entertainment value. Marketing and design coordinator in Tekla UK said people are likely to share posts or comments “since it is amusing”. She said Tekla can get customers involved through entertainment content in social media.

One example given by her was one marketing campaign video that got viral in Youtube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4ba1BqJ4S2M>). The video showed a hunter aimed his shoot-gun at a bear in the forest. A giant static picture of Tipp-Ex correction tape was placed by the side. At the very moment the hunter was about to pull the trigger, there appeared two options for viewers to choose:

- Shoot the bear.
- No, don't shoot the bear.

If a viewer clicks the button “shoot the bear”, this guy turns around and said “no, I can't kill the bear”, his hand reached out the screen, and took the Tipp-ex correction tape from the advertisement and erased the word “shoot” off from the title. Marketing and design coordinator in Tekla UK commented “It has been so successful, it's so funny. It is very interactive. You share on FB and it is everywhere”.

5.2.10 Challenges

During the interviews, many challenges were discussed in order to engage customers in social media. The main challenges are listed below.

There is little expertise of engaging customers on social media. All interviewees agreed that Tekla is lack of social media expertise. Tekla marketing people in headquarter and areas are administrators of Tekla social media sites. However, they are not trained to post and interact in social media. Tekla employees are still in the learning and testing period. Tekla product marketing manager said that “there could be much more done. The challenge is that no one knows how to do it and use it yet.” Tekla HQ content coordinator said that “It is good to have Twitter, but we don’t have a subject expert. It is quite difficult for us to do it, since it takes up a lot of time to tweet.” As a result, Tekla people are not fully committed to social media. Social media cannot be utilized to its full potential and it is not very efficient way of working in social media.

There is no agreed way of working in social media. As discussed in 5.2.6 section, there is an urgent need to create a process in social media, which defines Tekla’s way of working in social media. It includes social media content generation and evaluation process, cross-unit collaboration in Tekla, and the way of working with partners, customers and industry circles.

In Tekla, social media currently has only one voice, which is Tekla marketing teams in Tekla HQ and Tekla areas. Tekla HQ content coordinator said that “The internal challenge is there is no established process. The process could include the division, who does what.” Social media is a great way to attract prospects, who need to be followed up systematically. Marketing and design coordinator in Tekla UK said “Presales and technical people should be available when the leads come in, when things turn serious. Marketing’s job is to monitor that and get their input when needed.” Tekla HQ content coordinator continued to add that “There is a lot of knowledge existing in other units that probably would be interesting to follower. How to get them out and motivate them?”

It was suggested in the interviews that there should be some Key Performance Indicators to measure the activity and success of customer engagement in social media. Although sales is the ultimate goal and measurement. Goals such as number of followers/fans, number of posts from Tekla, number of likes per post, conversations with audience online, leads follow up. Tekla HQ marketing manager said that “KPIs should not be only the

number of fans but the number of people who are engaged and the quality of engagement.”

There is little management support and commitment. It was agreed among all interviewees, it is crucial to cultivate the attitude of regarding social media as a valuable channel to engage customers. Thus, cultivating the willingness and habit to participate and contribute to social media. Tekla HQ product marketing manager said that “Everyone is taking it as a ‘hobby’, no one is taking it seriously yet.” Usually there is limited resources in a team. Social media is often times the last priority. Former Tekla SEA marketing manager said that “It takes time for people to understand what you can do. The habit and routine of getting into it.” The change of attitude needs to be backed up with management in Tekla. It was learnt from the interviews, several key aspects are missing from the management in Tekla for social media, as shown in Figure 37.



Figure 37: challenges in social media management

Management oversees social media activity. Tekla HQ marketing manager said that there is no one in the management oversees the social media activity in Tekla and create the synergy among different channels, customer and partner groups and areas. Tekla HQ content coordinator suggested to have a person in Tekla who has the expertise of social media and manages social media strategy as well as coordinating among different channels. She said that “it would be good to have a manager who understands and is able to manage the network of content contributors from Tekla and the whole social media ecosystem with others in the industry.”

Tekla HQ content coordinator said that the reason for low involvement of other teams in social media activities is rooted in the top management level. Social media has not been recognized as one of the key marketing communication channels in the top management level, therefore, it is not expected to invest much effort and time. As a result, social media is not prioritized in Tekla organization, not even in the marketing team. Content coordinator in Tekla HQ said that “no executives to back marketing up and reinforce that, then it is a

marketing voice. People don't see the value in it. Social media is not prioritized in the management team and marketing people."

Assigned responsibility regarding social media activities should be assigned to individuals. According to content coordinator in Tekla HQ, she tried to collect content and keep the content fresh. However, it is a challenging task since she is alone in this process. She doesn't get much content proactively sent from colleagues in other teams. The main reason was that people are not assigned with this task, thus generating social media content is not prioritized. She commented, "It should be easy, we have 12 area offices and resellers sending pictures. But it is not on top of people's mind." Therefore, the commitment on the personnel level is needed. It means social media needs to be included in job description as an official work task. It was suggested that specific people from different units should be assigned with social media tasks.

Tekla HQ content coordinator said that "It would be great to have a speaker in LinkedIn with a strong voice. No one steps up to that role. There is no one in marketing who could do it." Tekla HQ marketing manager said "No one is specifically assigned for a role to be that spoken person in social media." It is necessary to have that person whose responsibility is to voice out. It applies to other roles as well. For instance, some sales people should be assigned the role to follow up leads from social media, some technical people are assigned the task to answer questions in social media.

6 Discussion

6.1 Answers to the research questions

6.1.1 Perception gaps between customers and business people

According to the questionnaire survey results, there are clear perception gaps between companies' assumptions and customers' social media preferences and behavior.

Firstly, B2B business people expect the customers to have a significantly higher interest to engage with business in social media. They expect customers to engage in 59% business-related activities in social media. However, this number is more than double of what customers are willing to engage 28%. Secondly, there is clear perception gap of which activities are popular in social media. Most customers are interested to engage in social media activities which they can silently learn and observe, for instance learning the products and viewing their peers' comments. However, B2B business people underestimated the proportion of those silent observers who just read news, access reviews and research for work. Customers are less interested in actively participating in social media activities, such as socialize for work and career, and interact with brands. Whereas B2B business people expected most of the customers to be engaged authors, who share their opinion, share pictures and videos in social media.

B2B business people have good understanding of customers' needs in social media in several aspects. In general, they have great grasp of the most important activities for customers in social media. B2B business people understand that customers prioritize learning the software, reviewing company and product information as well as accessing technical and customer service. In addition, they are aware of the preconditions for customers to engage with brands in social media is the interest in the subject. B2B business people understand customers do not engage mainly due to disinterest in the brand, privacy and spams issues.

6.1.2 Customer engagement advancement and deepening

Social media is increasingly important in B2B market. In around five years, social media might be the main channel for marketing and communication. It is essential to have a presence in social media now, and even more in the near future with the rising of generation Y, when they become the main workforce and decision makers.

Social media have multiple roles in terms of engaging customers. Firstly, social media is a new and effective way to reach customers, which enables real-time communication and two-way dialogue between customers and companies. Traditional channels are gradually being replaced with social media, for instance Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Secondly, social media is a platform that most people spend their spare time on. It is more relaxed and personal compared with traditional business communication channels, such as email and events. There is a great opportunity to build the relationship on a personal level. In addition, social media can serve the purpose of educating the audience. Companies should take the opportunity to raise the market awareness and build and brand image. Moreover, social media is a great tool to track and monitor customer activities. Followers in social media can be tracked, massive data can be collected and analyzed. Not only companies can learn more about customers, but also become aware of industry trend and competitors' information. Furthermore, companies can use social media as a differentiating factor from competitors. Social media can contribute to building outstanding service and local assistance being real-time, interactive and highly accessible.

There are several approaches to advance and deepen customer engagement in social media for B2B companies. First of all, an approachable corporate identity should be built in social media. Companies should cultivate several social media star personnel in the social media. Real personnel are introduced with their face and names presented to the audience. It adds a personal twist which brings brand closer to customers, also it gives the credibility of the content knowing the source of content. Companies should adopt a more personal and relaxed tone-of-voice in social media. It helps to engage customers on a personal and emotional level. As shown in Figure 38 (Sashi, 2012) customer engagement matrix, this approach can turn "Transactional Customers" to "delighted customers", or turn "Loyal customers" to "Fans" due to the emotional bonds built in social media. Customers would develop affective commitment to a company, which translates to advocates for a product, service, a brand, or the company.

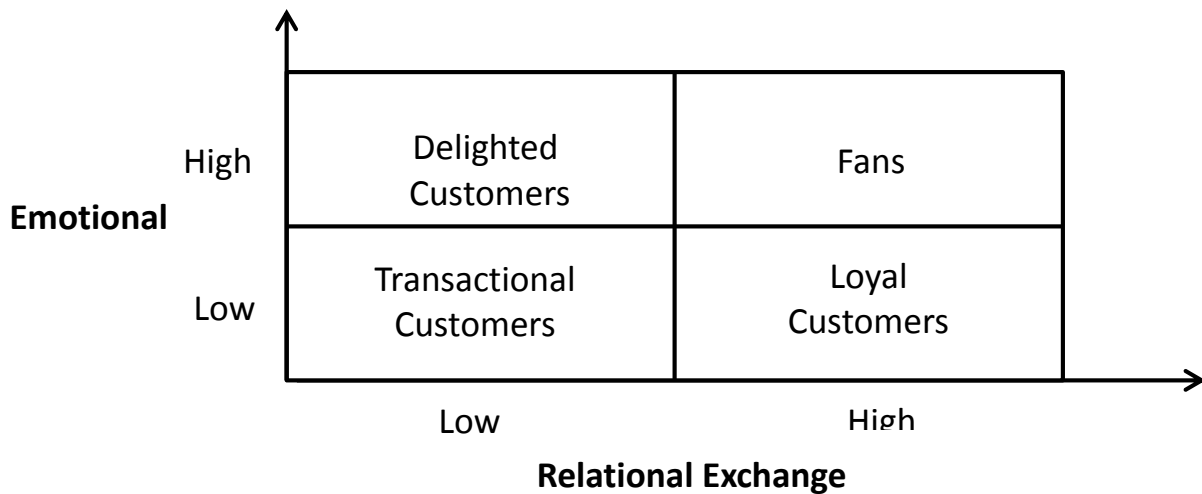


Figure 38: Customer engagement matrix (Sashi, 2012).

Transactional customers are at the low end of both relational exchange and emotional bond. This group is characterized with minimal personal relationships with the companies and no anticipation or obligation of future exchanges (Macneil, 1981). They are price sensitive and prone to deals. They do not have loyalty towards brands, the primary purchasing criteria is the minimal price or lowest total cost. Exchanges between the customer and the company are temporary and limited to a particular transaction (Sashi, 2012).

Secondly, content is essential to attract the audience and keep them interested in companies' social media page. The message could be tailored to target certain group to deepen the engagement with them. Tekla should also encourage user-generated content in Tekla's page. To ensure a constant flow of valuable content in social media, a content creation process was proposed in the interviews. The content should be generated by Tekla employees from different function units with their expertise of the products and insights about customers, such as sales and technical people. They should be officially assigned with the tasks to regularly create the content and pass on the information to marketing team. Then marketing people validate and synchronize what content to be published and when. In addition, the content should be created with guidance and evaluated before publishing. Thus, the content can engage customers efficiently and effectively. The essential elements of good content in social media are entertainment, timing, relevance, accuracy, content about customers, and variety of content format. Interesting, credible, tailored and educating content reinforce customers rational to stay committed to the company. Customers are developing into "Loyal customers" and "Fans"

as shown in the Figure 38. They are bond to the company with calculative commitment in which they are locked in with the company. Customers are loyal to the current supplier not because of the emotional attachment but purely rational reasons.

6.2 Comparing results with previous studies

This research focuses on finding the perception gaps between B2B companies and customers in social media in the building and construction industry. There is no extensive existing literature or studies on this topic in building and construction industry. Previous study (Baird and Parasnis, 2011) has been done to investigate the perception gaps between B2C businesses and customers. B2B companies are found in this research to have better understanding than B2C companies on customers' primary use of social media, their interest of associating with brand, and to what extend they feel proud of brands in social media.

B2B and B2C customers both understand that social media is primarily a platform to interact with friends and family. Baird and Parasnis (2011) report showed that social media is mostly a personal platform. 70% of B2C customers chose to interact with friends and family, when asked why they go to social media (Braid and Parasnis, 2011). This corresponds to the result from this research, "connect with friends and family" is ranked as the most popular and important social media activity by customers in this research. 93% B2B customer respondents (39 out of 42 respondents) use social media to connect with friends and family, making it the most popular activity in social media.

The research shows different opinions of B2B customers' on the influence of social media from B2C customers in previous studies. 15 out of 42 (36%) customers in B2B markets agree that the quality of social media interaction will influence their purchase decision. It is much less than that of B2C customers (49%, n=1056) (Baird and Parasnis, 2011). B2B purchases often involve multiple parties and it generally takes much longer sales cycle. The influence of social interaction for customers in B2B is not as strong as that for customers in B2C.

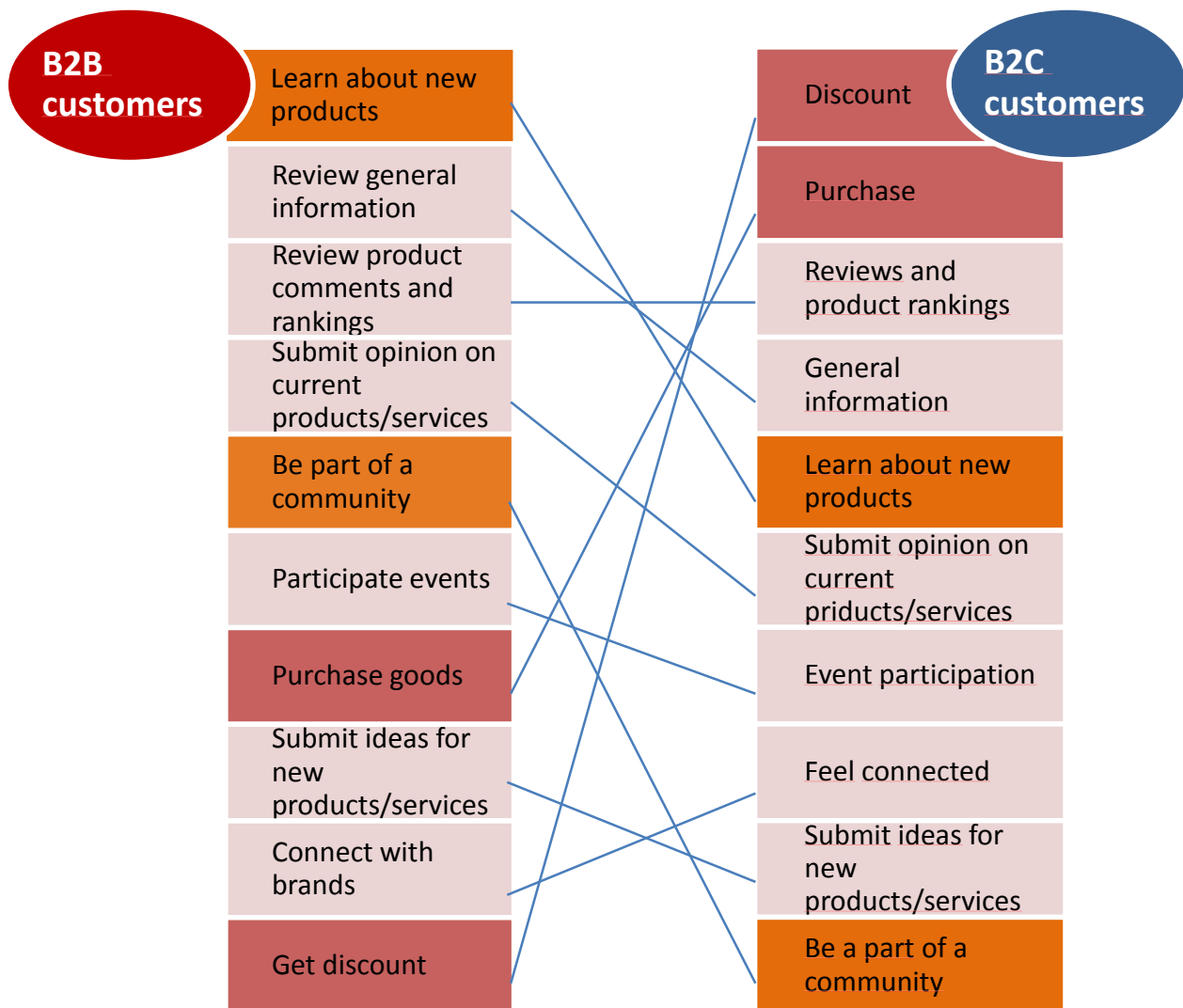


Figure 39: B2B (this study) vs. B2C (Baird and Parasnis, 2011) customers ranking in social media activities.

However, there are differences between B2B and B2C customers' preference in social media activities. Figure 39 shows the differences of social media activities ranking between B2B customers and B2C customers. As highlighted in red in Figure 39, B2B customers deprioritize "get discount" and "purchase goods", whereas they are ranked as the top two social media activities for B2C customers. In B2B market, purchase decisions are usually more complicated and lengthy than B2C purchases. Therefore, social media is not the primary channel for purchasing for B2B. In addition, customers in B2B markets are more interested to learn about the product, being involved in the community and help develop the product offering. Customers in B2C markets tend to have less interest to interact with the business and help it to develop.

6.3 Limitations of the study

This research adopted both quantitative research method, questionnaire survey, and qualitative research method, interview.

Firstly, the sample sizes in this research is rather small. The customers sample size for questionnaire survey is 56. Tekla has almost 60,000 corporate customers, and many more software users and decision influencers. Therefore, 56 is a very small sample size to reflect the opinion of Tekla customers. The sample size of Teklans is 42 for the questionnaire survey. Tekla has more than 600 employees. It can only represent the views of Teklans to some extent. Five Teklans were interviewed for this research and they are all from marketing units. Thus, the opinions of sales, helpdesk, product developers might not be reflected in this research. However, marketing people are the groups who supposedly are most involved with social media activity and with the best insight of this topic.

Secondly, the partial randomized data can be misleading. For the questionnaire survey, the customer sample was not entirely randomly selected. Some customers were approached during Tekla events and technical trainings. It implies that they had been in close contact with Tekla during the recent period of time. The satisfaction of recent contacts with Tekla might influence the willingness to engage with Tekla in social media. The questionnaire survey link was posted in social media, Facebook and Twitter to collect data. The respondents answered the survey following the social media links, which indicates that they were already familiar with the social media environment. They were the active and following Tekla in social media. Therefore, they might have fewer barriers to approach and engage with business in social media.

Thirdly, the variation and scale can be set better. In the questionnaire survey, there are many questions which ask respondents to scale. The variation is from 1 to 5, which might not be broad enough. There might not be significant difference between two data sets, customers and Teklans. It would be more accurate if the scale is from 1 to 10. More variation can be obtained through a greater scale. Results can be observed more clearly.

In addition, online interviews might limit the depth of discussion and interpretation of the content. 2 out of 5 interviews were conducted online. Online interviews without camera images miss large amount of context in which the interviewee spoke, for instance facial expressions and gestures. It might lead to misunderstanding. Compared to face to face communication, online interviews do not easily foster a personal relationship with trust and

openness. Therefore, the interview might not reveal the true thoughts or deep concerns of the interviewee.

Furthermore, the researcher's subjective opinion might affect the interpretation of the survey data and interviews. She had been working in Tekla for two years. The knowledge of the existing way of working had been gained in prior to this research. The relationship with the interviewees had been formed. Therefore, the dynamic of being colleagues might open up or limit the information and opinions revealed by interviewees. The existing knowledge and experience of the research might influence the understanding of data. It might be difficult to separate existing knowledge from the obtained knowledge from interviewees.

Moreover, regional cultural, gender and age aspects are not analyzed in this research. It plays a big role in customers' communication pattern and social interaction preference and habits. This survey research was done in four areas with different culture and language background. The results from four countries were presented and compared. But the reasons of differences were not analyzed in light of customers' cultural roots. It might reveal more traits of how to engage with people in different cultures in social media. Age and gender were not compared nor analyzed in the survey. The willingness to engage in social media and their activities preference might be directly related to their life experience and gender specific characteristics.

6.4 Practical implication

6.4.1 Use of social media channels

Based on results of this study, among Tekla USA customers using social media in business is widely accepted. Customers from India and UK are comfortable engaging with brands in social media. Tekla should definitely utilize the opportunity to engage with customers in social media in USA, India and UK. Finnish customers have relatively low interest to be active in social media for business purpose. It indicated that it might be too early to invest intensive resource and push Finnish customers to engage with Tekla in social media. Tekla Finland should have multiple channels in addition to social media to engage with customers.

LinkedIn is the clearly the leading social media site for business usage in general. According the survey results, customers in different countries have slightly different preference of social media sites for business purpose. Tekla Finland can primarily focus on developing customer engagement

in LinkedIn and invest in Facebook as the second platform. Tekla India can use most of the resource in Facebook and LinkedIn for customer engagement and utilize Youtube as a channel to distribute marketing videos. Tekla USA is recommended to focus customer engagement in LinkedIn and Twitter, minimize the resource invested in Facebook. Tekla UK should further investigate which social media platform their customers are active for business, and focus on those channels instead of the social media sites studied in this survey.

In a highly connected and interacted network or community in social media, participants passively view information and being influenced by friends and peers. The top three social media activities for customers across all target countries are “Learn about new products”, “Review general information” and “review product comments and rankings”. They are highly recommended to include in social media as the activities to engage customers.

Table 4: Summary of social media status in Finland, India, USA and UK.

	Finland	India	USA	UK
Importance of Social media	Medium low	Medium	Medium high	Medium
Channels	LinkedIn, Facebook	Facebook, LinkedIn	LinkedIn, Twitter	Need further investigation
Popular activities	“Learn about new products” “Review general information” “review product comments and rankings”			

6.4.2 Advance in the customer engagement cycle

In Chapter 5.2, nine methods were summarized from the study to deepen and advance customer engagement in social media.

- Be present in social media
- Know the audience in social media
- Social media channels
- Build a corporate identity
- Create a content guideline
- Generate the right content
- Establish a content creation process
- Have synergy among difference operations and projects
- New customer engagement ideas

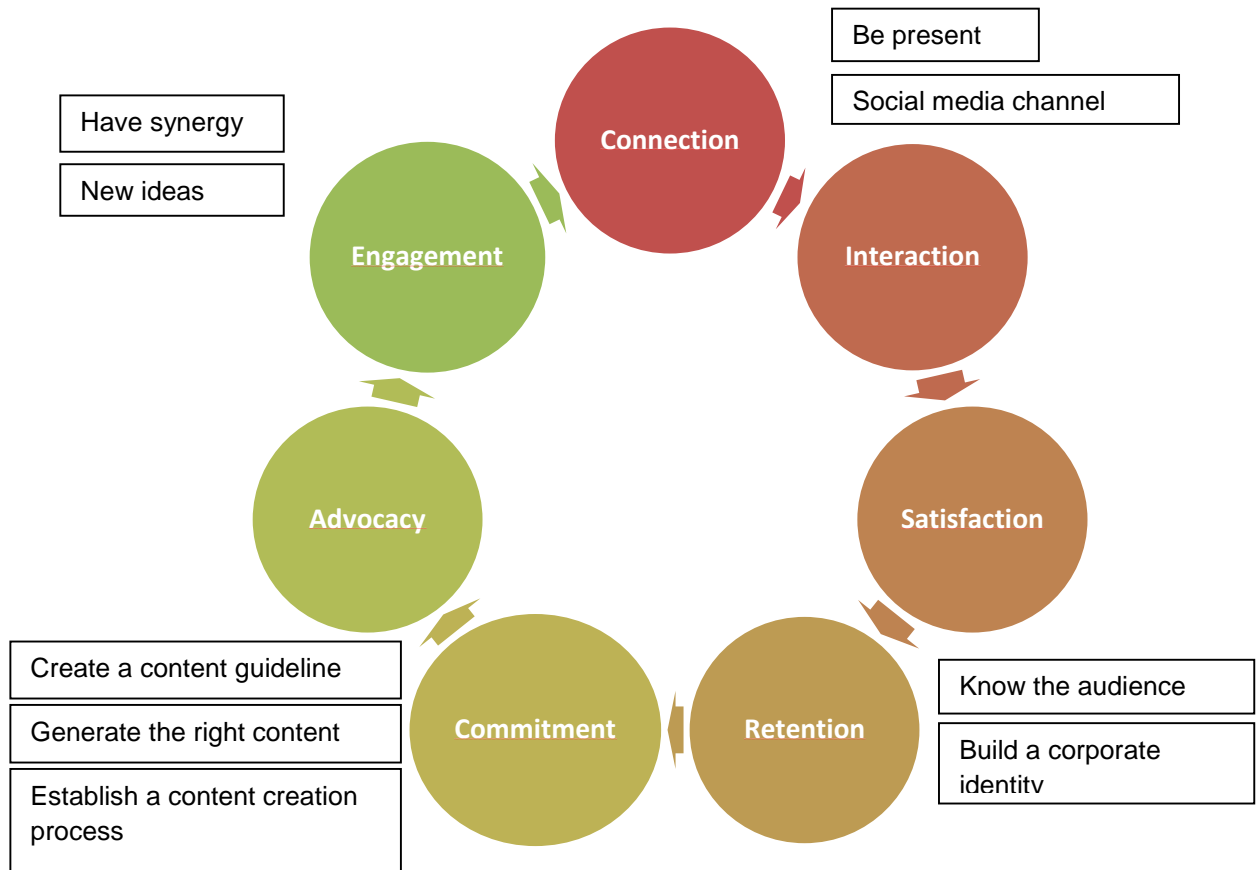


Figure 40: Customer engagement cycle (Sashi, 2012)

Each of the method plays a significant role in the customer engagement cycle (Sashi, 2012), presented in Chapter 2.3.2, Figure 4. The customer engagement cycle includes different stages, connection, interaction, satisfaction, retention, commitment, advocacy and engagement. As shown in Figure 40, the methods are located besides certain customer engagement stages to demonstrate when and how they help to advance the customer engagement stage in practice.

It is important to establish social media presence, select the right platforms to reach customers. Social media greatly facilitate the establishment of connections with a wide audience of individuals and firms. At this point, the customers can be included in the customer engage cycle. By establishing the connection, companies can perform basic interactions with customers, such as provide product and service information and answer their questions.

In order to satisfy and retain customers, business need to know their audience in social media and understand customers' expectation and preference. Fulfilling customers' expectation and needs in social media activities will lead to delight and satisfied

customers. It is a necessary condition for customer engagement so that customers stay connected and continue to interact. Overall satisfaction over time or highly positive emotions can result in customer retention.

Affective commitment and calculative commitment are the major factors contributing to overall commitment. It implies that business in social media need to have both rational and emotional bonds with audience. Building a corporate identity that customers can approach and identify with can help build trust and loyalty. The right content which provides solid evidence of business and product merits can feed customer rational need. As a result, trust and loyalty can be built between companies and customers. If the customer has both rational and emotional links, customers tend to have a committed relationship.

Strong emotional link can be built through the right content in social media which resonates with customers' value and desire. Customer relationship is shifting away from caring and delighting customers. Companies and customers are looking after each other's interests and focus on the exchange of values that transcend their self-interests. If the customer have very strong emotional relationship with the company, they may spread the words about their positive experience regarding a product, a service, a company or a brand. Delighted customers who have developed strong emotional bonds with the company are likely to become advocates.

Finally, the synergy among different offices and projects, new customer engagement ideas can help to keep the customers engaged with the company. Customers are included in company's value creation process, it enhance customers' satisfaction of products and service, and companies are able to grasp customers' need while it is developing.

6.4.3 Social media management

Company's media management should be built in two levels: corporation level (within the company) and industry level (link with external industrial players).

Within the organization, a cross-unit social media team should be formed as demonstrated in Figure 41. The team consists of marketers, sales people, and technical people and industry experts in both headquarter and area offices. The responsibilities of providing content and interacting with customers in social media should be officially assigned in the job descriptions. This team should be led by a manager whose role is to set the customer

engagement strategy in social media, plan the customer engagement activities, oversees the flow of content creation for social media.

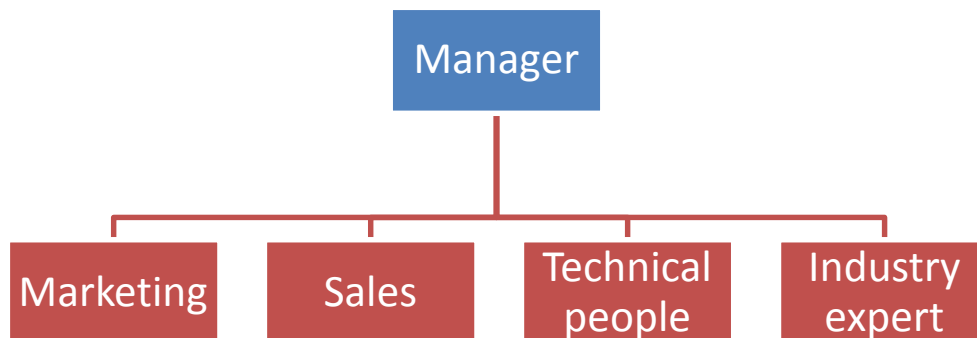


Figure 41: Tekla social media team structure.

In addition, the social media team needs to work together with other industry players in social media, including area offices, customers, partners and other industry players to ensure the synergy among different entities in social media. Content should be created, shared and promoted in a systematic way with defined target audience and goal across the industry social media network.



Figure 42: Create social media synergy with other industry players.

6.5 Future research

This research has a focus on B2B companies' engagement with existing customers in social media. There are a few relevant studies that could be conducted in the future to further expand and deepen this topic.

Firstly, customer engagement in social media in this research refers to customer engagement on the individual person's level. This research investigated how individuals in the companies interact and engage with businesses. However, in the B2B context, the customers are companies. There are many parties behind each purchase decisions. Therefore, it is very important to ensure the engagement in social media is not limited to individuals only. The next focus naturally is on how to engage individuals in social media, thus influence the companies' decision, and lead to business purchase, customer satisfaction and retention.

Secondly, the engagement target in this research is existing customers. It is necessary to study how social media can be utilized to reach new potential customers and help speed up the sales funnel.

Thirdly, social media is one of the many channels companies utilize to communicate and engage customers. It would be very beneficial to investigate how social media should be integrated in the holistic marketing strategy. How different channels can be used to engage customers in a systematic way, and what the process can be.

Last but not least, the empirical studies were done in 2013. The results reflect the social media usage during the period of research. It does not suggest the development of social media usage nor customer engagement trend. During the same time, new social media sites are emerging and existing ones might change or disappear. The social media usage and customer engagement in social media trend can be studied to suggest how companies can plan for the future.

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Appendix

Appendix 1

Questionnaire survey for Tekla employees.

Customer engagement through social media

Filling the survey approximately takes 5 minutes. Thanks for your time and input!

Which unit in Tekla do you work for? *

Email address *

What social media channels are you active in general for business? *

- ☐ Facebook
- ☐ LinkedIn
- ☐ Twitter
- ☐ Youtube
- ☐ Wikis
- ☐ Blogging sites
- ☐ None
- ☐ Other:

What social media channels are you active in general for leisure? *

- ☐ Facebook
- ☐ LinkedIn
- ☐ Twitter
- ☐ Youtube
- ☐ Wikis
- ☐ Blogging sites

- ☐ None
- ☐ Other:

What do you think our CUSTOMERS do in social media or social networking sites? *

- ☐ Connect with friends and family
- ☐ Read news
- ☐ Access entertainment (games etc.)
- ☐ Share opinion (posts, blogs etc.)
- ☐ Access reviews (product, movies, hotels etc)
- ☐ Meet people
- ☐ Share media (pictures, videos etc.)
- ☐ Research for work (marketing intelligence etc)
- ☐ Get deals
- ☐ Interact with brands
- ☐ Network for work and career
- ☐ Search jobs
- ☐ Other:

If CUSTOMERS interact with companies via social media, why? Please prioritize their reasons below. *

1 = 2 = 3 = 4 = Very 5 =
Unimportant Slightly Important Important Critical
 Important

Get discount	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Purchase goods	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

1 = 2 = 3 = 4 = Very 5 =
 Unimportant Slightly Important Important Critical
 Important

Review product
 comments and
 rankings



Review general
 information



Learn about new
 products



Submit opinion
 on current
 products/services



Access customer
 service



Access technical
 support



Participate
 events



Connect with
 brands



Submit ideas for
 new
 products/services



1 = 2 = 3 = 4 = Very 5 =
 Unimportant Slightly Important Important Critical
 Important

Be part of a
community



Search career
opportunities



Why do you think customers DON'T engage with brands in social media? *Why don't they comment, share or post on brands' social media channels?

- ☐ Privacy concerns
- ☐ Spams
- ☐ Disinterest in the brand
- ☐ I am not an expert in this subject to comment or share
- ☐ I want to learn instead of teaching
- ☐ Other:

What are the preconditions for customers to engage with brands? *

- ☐ Passion in brands
- ☐ Recommendation from friends/colleagues
- ☐ Confidence and competence
- ☐ Interests in the subject
- ☐ Other:

Please rate YOUR AGREEMENT with the following statements on a scale of 1 to 5, where: *1 = "Totally DISAGREE", 2 = "Sort of Disagree, 3 = NEITHER, 4 = Sort of Agree, and 5 = "Totally AGREE"

1

2

3

4

5

The more interaction
customers have with
brands in social
media, the more
loyal they feel
toward this brand.



The quality of
interaction
customers have
with brands in
social media will
directly influence
their purchase
decision.



Appendix 2

Questionnaire survey for Tekla customers.

Customer expectation in social media

Filling the survey approximately takes 10 minutes. Thanks for your time and input!

Country *

Company

Email *

Position

Considering social media sites in general, how important it is to have a presence and being active *1 =

Not important at all, 2 = Not very important, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Very important, 5 = Extremely important

1 2 3 4 5

Not important at all ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Extremely important

Where are you most active in general for business? *

- ☐ Facebook
- ☐ LinkedIn
- ☐ Twitter
- ☐ Youtube
- ☐ Wikis
- ☐ Blogging sites
- ☐ None

Where are you most active in general for leisure? *

- ☐ Facebook
- ☐ LinkedIn
- ☐ Twitter
- ☐ Youtube
- ☐ Wikis
- ☐ Blogging sites
- ☐ None

What do you do in social media or social networking sites? *

- ☐ Connect with friends and family
- ☐ Read news
- ☐ Access entertainment (games etc.)
- ☐ Share opinion (posts, blogs etc.)
- ☐ Access reviews (product, movies, hotels etc)
- ☐ Meet people
- ☐ Share media (pictures, videos etc.)
- ☐ Research for work (marketing intelligence etc)
- ☐ Get deals
- ☐ Interact with brands
- ☐ Network for work and career
- ☐ Search jobs
- ☐ Other:

If you interact with companies via social media, why? Please prioritize the reasons below. *

1 = Unimportant 2 = Slightly Important 3 = Important 4 = Very Important 5 = Critical

Get discount	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Purchase goods	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Review product comments and rankings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Review general information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Learn about new products	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Submit opinion on current products/services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Access customer service	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Access technical support	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Participate events	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Connect with brands	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

1 = Unimportant 2 = Slightly Important 3 = Important 4 = Very Important 5 = Critical

Submit ideas for new products/services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Be part of a community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Search career opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Get free trial	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please add your own reason to interact with brand in social media.

If you don't engage with brands in social media, why not? *Why don't you comment, share or post on brands' social media channels?

- ☐ Privacy concerns
- ☐ Spams
- ☐ Disinterest in the brand
- ☐ I am not an expert in this subject to comment or share
- ☐ I want to learn instead of teaching
- ☐ Other:

What are preconditions to engage with brands? *

- ☐ Passion in brands
- ☐ Recommendation from friends/colleagues
- ☐ Confidence and competence

- ☐ Interests in the subject
- ☐ Other:

Please rate YOUR AGREEMENT with the following statements about interaction in social media on a scale of 1 to 5, where: *1 = "Totally DISAGREE", 2 = "Sort of Disagree, 3 = NEITHER, 4 = Sort of Agree, and 5 = "Totally AGREE"

1 =	2 = Sort of	3 = Neither	4 = Sort of	5 = Totally
Totally	Disagree		Agree	Agree
Disagree				

The more interaction I have with brands in social media, the more loyal I feel toward this brand.



The quality of interaction I have with brands in social media will directly influence my purchase decision.

